



JAMES D. HESTER

Paul's Concept of Inheritance

A Contribution to the Understanding
of Heilsgeschichte

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PAUL'S CONCEPT OF INHERITANCE

A Contribution to the Understanding of Heilsgeschichte

CURRICULUM VITAE

The author was born in Philadelphia, Penna., on February 15, 1939, to James Donald Hester, a Baptist minister, and Nova Louise *née* Pace. At the outbreak of World War II, the father became a chaplain in the United States Navy. Because of the frequent changes of duty associated with that work, the author lived in various sections of the U.S., attending schools in Massachusetts, Maryland, Illinois, and California. Upon graduation from high school, he attended Eastern Baptist College where he earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1960. He then attended the California Baptist Theological Seminary, graduating with the Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1963. He and his family then came to Basel where he studied under Professor Dr Oscar Cullmann, and took classes with Professors Bo Reicke, Ernst Jenni, and Hendrik van Oyen. After completing his work *insigni cum laude*, he returned to the United States and is presently Instructor in Religion at the University of Redlands. He is a member of *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* and the American Academy of Religion. His publications include an article in the *Programmschrift* for Professor Cullmann, *Oikonomia*, and his translation of a collection of Professor Cullmann's articles on Vatican II should appear shortly.

PAUL'S CONCEPT OF INHERITANCE

*A Contribution to the Understanding
of Heilsgeschichte*

JAMES D. HESTER

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To My Wife

DARILYN

whose faith in me
and support of my dreams
has made this possible

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How does one go about recognising all those who have played a role in the production of even so short a study as this one? The numbers of those whose kindness and help have been mine to share are legion. To separate those who are to be mentioned from those who cannot means only a separation based on the quantity of help given, not the quality.

I must mention first my Doktorvater and friend, Professor Dr Oscar Cullmann of Basel. His interest, kindness, help, and friendship meant and mean much to me. If at times I sound like him in my argument and conclusions, it is because I believe he has found truths so profound that examination of them only proves their validity. Next to him stands Dr David H. Wallace of California Baptist Theological Seminary in Covina, California, my friend and first New Testament teacher. If I am influenced by Cullmann's thought, it is because I value Dave Wallace's respect for and evaluation of that thought.

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To these and many others, my debt in a real sense is inestimable.

JAMES D. HESTER

University of Redlands
October, 1967

PREFACE

THE subtitle of the paper indicates its real purpose. By means of Paul's concept of Inheritance, which is placed in the context of the legal and biblical concepts, I shall attempt to describe the elements of Heilsgeschichte which I find in passages of Paul's letters, primarily Rom. 4 and 8, Gal. 3 and 4. However, rather than dealing with all the elements of these passages, I have limited myself to the aspects of Inheritance which I find there. Therefore, while Heilsgeschichte is the foundation of the study, Inheritance provides its limits.

I have attempted to avoid the pitfall of equating the concept of Inheritance with the terminology of Inheritance. As much as possible I have sought out and defined the facets of Inheritance which are not a part of the line of terms formed by *naḥălāh*, *klēronomia*, and their cognates. However, a concept is, to some extent, built on basic terminology and grows out of a definition of terms. For that reason I have defined both *naḥălāh* and *klēronomia* as 'inheritance', for I believe that this definition best fits the concept.

I wish to see the definition 'inheritance' retained, because it conveys the ideas of (a) something which is given, normally by testament; (b) something that continues to remain in possession, inalienable property; (c) something which is a family possession, a patrimony; (d) something which may be conveyed by adoption to persons originally outside the family; that is to say, the family line is renewed, in case of the failure of the line to continue, in order that the thing possessed might remain in the family. As I hope will be brought out in the discussion in the paper, all these elements are present in the concept of Inheritance, both in the biblical concept in general and Paul's concept in particular.

The concept of Inheritance is one of the best concepts in the Bible to demonstrate the continuity and discontinuity of certain Old and New Testament ideas. It depends on concepts which are synonymous, but which display definite changes, in the thinking of the authors of the two Testaments.

For example, the Promise for a Land which God makes to Abraham develops into a promise of salvation, or justification,

in the New Testament. What Abraham was promised was a Land in which his descendants would be formed into a holy nation. This implies a unique relationship to God, a relationship which is described in both Testaments as 'sonship', or 'heirship'. This relationship became a reality in the Covenant of Faith in which by grace and election God adopted the man who responded in faith to His call. That man became a son of God, a member of the people of God, and could expect to enter into the Land. In other words, salvation was living in the Land, for a man could only live in the Land if he had been adopted by God. The Promise for a Land, therefore, is the basis of salvation, and salvation is the confirmation that a man will share in the Promise.

The Promised Land of the Old Testament becomes the Kingdom of God in the New Testament. Both have the characteristics of being the symbol of God's blessings, the holiest of all places, and inheritance of the people of God. Both become the abstract or symbolic representation of the place where God gathers His people together under His rule.

The concrete location of God's rule develops from the Land in the Old Testament to the New Creation in the New Testament. Palestine is universalised and becomes the eschatological world, the renewed creation. However, there is no loss of geographical reality. God rules in a definite place.

The People and Nation of God develops from Israel in the Old Testament to the Church in the New Testament. Both are formed by the sons and heirs of God, who become His sons and heirs by faith.

Therefore, there is a continuity, because the people of God are always formed by faith, always the seed of Abraham, and always inherit the Land. However, there is also a discontinuity, for ethnic Israel is not the only people of God; Palestine is not the Promised Land; and the Law is not the mediator of salvation. The mid-point of Inheritance is the Heir, Jesus Christ, who forms the people of God in Himself and leads them into the Kingdom of God.

All these aspects can be summarised by the concept of Inheritance. The Inheritance is the Promised Land in which God gathers His sons and heirs to form a holy nation over which He rules. The sons and heirs of God who inherit the Land are those who by faith join themselves to God's Son. In each of

these ideas the foundation of Heilsgeschichte can be discovered.

A few remarks concerning mechanics: I have not attempted to reproduce all the philological arguments behind each term discussed. In most cases I attempt a summary of the background ideas and a defence of my own definition. The footnotes supply references to supporting works and further reading. Also, if I attack a man's position in the text, I do so because (*a*) he is a representative of a position with which I disagree; and (*b*) it is a convenient way to outline my own argument. Other than these distinctions, however, there is no difference in the importance between arguments in the text or in the footnotes.

Finally, Inheritance is one of the better terms with which to illustrate Heilsgeschichte. It displays an 'already-but-not-yet' nature, in that it is possessed, but not completely. It refers to a possession with a history, something passed down through God's family. I choose to study it, therefore, in order to make a contribution to the understanding of Heilsgeschichte.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AER	American Ecclesiastical Review
ATR	Anglican Theological Review
BT	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i> (ET ed. by Rabbi Dr I. Epstein, 18 vols.). London: Soncino Press, 1961
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
E.R.E.	<i>Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics</i> (ed. J. Hastings, 13 vols.). Edinburgh, 1908.
EQ	Evangelical Quarterly
ET	Evangelische Theologie
ExT	Expository Times
HDB	Dictionary of Bible (ed. J. Hastings, 5 vols.). Edinburgh, 1900.
HDCG	<i>Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels</i> (ed. J. Hastings, 2 vols.). Edinburgh, 1906.
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JR	The Journal of Religion
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
NKZ	Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift
NTS	New Testament Studies
RTWB	<i>A Theological Wordbook of the Bible</i> (ed. A. Richardson). New York, 1962.
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
TEH	Theologische Existenz Heute
TLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung
TSK	Theologische Studien und Kritiken
TWBNT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> (hrsg. von G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, 7 Bände). Stuttgart, 1933ff.
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des deutschen-Palästina Verein
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZST	Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

SECTION ONE

BACKGROUND STUDIES

IT is almost a truism to assert that no study of the theology of Paul can be complete without some consideration of the historical and theological context from which he speaks. One must be aware of the terminology, the theological concerns, and the systems of thought available to him which might have influenced his thought to a greater or lesser degree.

Therefore, the purpose of this section is (*a*) briefly to outline and explain the terminology of the Inheritance concept, giving the prevalent ideas which lie behind them; (*b*) to outline briefly and explain the three most widespread systems of inheritance laws of Paul's time—Jewish, Hellenistic and Roman—giving a judgment as to which one Paul was most dependent upon; and (*c*) to outline the biblical concept of Inheritance, including a short section on intertestamental literature, with its major highlights.

In order to fulfil this purpose, two chapters have been created. The first chapter deals with the definitions of terms, mostly as they occur in biblical contexts, and with an outline of the major points of inheritance laws found in Jewish, Hellenistic and Roman legal systems. Because a great deal of work has been done in these areas, this chapter, more than any other, depends heavily on the work of other men and their conclusions and argues points in detail only when the findings of this study disagree with earlier conclusions.

The second chapter is devoted to outlining the biblical concept of Inheritance as it is manifest in the Old Testament, intertestamental literature, and the New Testament. For the most part only major themes are dealt with, with short explanations being offered for deviations from these themes.

Normally, background work of this kind might be expected to be found as an integral part of the chapters on Paul's concept of Inheritance. However, it is the opinion of the author that the chapters on Paul should deal with the unique contributions of Paul to the Inheritance concept and the similarities or common material outlined earlier and presupposed. Therefore, the

contents of this section form the foundation of the Pauline section and will be referred to constantly throughout the remainder of the paper.

CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION

A. DEFINITION

It is the purpose of this section to examine the use of the two most important words of the Inheritance concept and to reach a conclusion regarding their definition and translation. The words are *naḥālāh* and *klēronomia*.¹

N. occurs 213 times in the Old Testament, appearing mostly in Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and Psalms. The verb from which it is derived is *nāhal*, which occurs 59 times throughout the Old Testament, most commonly in Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua.²

In the historical books N. is used to refer to the land of Canaan in two ways. In the early tradition N. referred to the land which the individual tribes or families had allotted to them upon entrance into Canaan (Num. 36.7, *et passim*).³ Later, especially in Deuteronomy and the deuteronomic tradition, N. was used to refer to the entire Land of Israel, the collected lands of the tribes.⁴ However, in spite of these two uses, the historical books generally use N. to refer to the entire

¹ Henceforth referred to as N. and K. respectively. An extensive and detailed examination of these terms is not intended here. For that the reader is directed to J. Hermann and W. Foerster, TWBNT, III, pp. 766-86, or to one of the articles mentioned in the following notes.

² N. is used only three times preceding its use in reference to the land of Canaan: Gen. 31.14, 48.6, and Exod. 15.17. A complete discussion of N. can be found in F. Horst, 'Zwei Begriffe für Eigentum: *naḥālāh* and '*dhūzāh*', *Verbannung und Heimkehr* (W. Rudolph Festschrift, hrsg. von A. Kuske), Tübingen (1961), pp. 133-56.

³ G. von Rad, 'Verheissenes Land und Jahwes Land im Hexateuch', ZDPV, 66 (1943), pp. 193-4.

⁴ G. von Rad, *Das Gottesvolk im Deuteronomium*, Stuttgart (1929), pp. 6, 10. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (ET, D. M. G. Stalker), London (1962), vol. I, p. 224: 'The term (*naḥālāh*) has a long history in Israel; it belongs to the sacral body of law dealing with the tenure of the land, and originally designated the heritable land allotted by Yahweh to the clan or family. But Deuteronomy is the first to speak of a *naḥālāh* of Israel's. In actual fact the term *naḥālāh* is a theological abstraction. The old Amphictyony as a body had no *naḥālāh*; it was simply the sum total of the *naḥālōth* of the politically autonomous clans. It was clearly only the formation of the state, which brought the tribes into very close political as well as religious alliance, that created the prerequisite of the Deuteronomic idea of Israel as so much of a single entity that in comparison the individual clans completely retire into the background.' More will be said of this below.

Promised Land, both before and after the allotments had been made.

Each tribe is allotted land as N. except the Levites. Their N. was to be their service to Yahweh and the offerings brought for His worship (Deut. 10.9, 14.27-29, 18.1-2; Joshua 13.14). To help support them, however, each tribe was to give them cities in which to dwell and pastures upon which to feed their livestock (Num. 18.20-26, 26.62; Deut. 18.22; Joshua 21.2-3).

In the Psalms and the Prophets N. is given a wider reference. It is no longer used exclusively for the Land but also came to be used for the People and the Land as the N. of Yahweh (Ps. 28.9, 68.10, 78.62, 94.14; Isa. 19.25, 47.6, 63.17; Jer. 3.19, 12.14-15).¹ The Land retained its place of importance, however, as the primary reference of N., for both in the Psalms and the Prophets it is referred to as N. (Ps. 37.18, 47.5, 105.11, 111.6, 135.12, 136.21-22; Jer. 17.14; Ezek. 36.12, 54.1, 47.14, 44.28).

The particular idea of N. can be better understood when three passages in the Old Testament are examined. One passage offers a contrast, the other two an illustration.

In the Abram story of Gen. 15, the verb used in reference to the Land is *yāraš*. It has been pointed out that besides 'to take into possession', *yāraš* can also mean 'to walk upon' or 'to tread on'. When used in reference to land, it implies occupying land by force, seizing it.²

This verb has overtones of active participation on the part of the possessor in the taking of his possession. In contrast N. is looked on as a gift.³ The tribes must conquer the land and occupy it, but it is the Land which Yahweh gave to them. This is the meaning behind the casting of the lots. The Land is given by lot, but then it must be captured and taken into possession.

In the laws of the Year of Jubilee in Lev. 25, provision is made for the return of all land to its original owners or their descendants. The tribal allotment was inalienable property. It could not be sold in perpetuity because it belonged to the Lord (25.23). Only possessions bought from a stranger

¹ See Horst, op. cit., pp. 141, 143.

² L. A. Snijders, 'Genesis XV. The Covenant with Abram', *Oudtestamentische Studien*, Deel XII (1958), p. 268.

³ H. Wildberger, 'Israel und Sein Land', ET, 16 (1956), pp. 407-8.

could be kept and bequeathed to a man's heirs (25.45-46).¹

The inalienability of family property is demonstrated in the story of Naboth and Ahaz recorded in 1 Kings 21.1-4. Ahaz wants to buy Naboth's vineyard. Naboth refuses on the grounds that it is 'the N. of my fathers' (21.3). The vineyard was part of a patrimony passed from father to son to Naboth, and he wished to keep it so that he could one day pass it on to his heirs.

An extra-biblical practice which demonstrates this attitude toward land can be found in the Mari documents. A. Malamat points out that the only way land could be sold outside of a tribe in Mari was for the prospective buyer to be adopted into the family or tribe wishing to sell the property. The land could then be given to the buyer as his hereditary portion.²

From the observations made above it is now possible to posit a definition for N. It is that possession, normally land, which is *given* to a person or persons solely because of the relationship in which they stand to the giver. Usually this relationship, legal or spiritual, is that of a child to his father. The possession can be described as a patrimony, inalienable land or landed property which is passed from father to son.³ Therefore, in most contexts N. can best be translated as 'inheritance'.

K. occurs 163 times in the Septuagint. It is used as a translation for N. 145 times. The fact that the Septuagint translators used the verb *klēronomein* for the translation of the verb *yāraš* 111 times out of 163 occurrences probably can be taken to mean that they had forgotten the Old Testament distinction between the verbs *yāraš* and *nāḥal*. However, by using K. as the translation for N., they used the word which is most often used for 'inherited goods or property' in the Graeco-Egyptian

¹ Ibid., pp. 411ff. Wildberger points out that both the laws of the Sabbath Year and Jubilee Year were instituted to protect the N. of the tribes and families.

² A. Malamat, 'Mari and the Bible: Some Patterns of Tribal Organisation and Institutions', JAOS, 82 (1962), pp. 143-50. Malamat says that there is a good parallel to OT thought here. Both Mari and the OT see land as an inalienable patrimony owned theoretically by the gentile unit. Therefore, the transfer of land could be accomplished only by inheritance (p. 149). See also I. Mendelson, 'A Ugaritic Parallel to the Adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh', *Israel Exploration Journal*, 9 (1959), pp. 180-3, who concludes that intra-family adoption was known and practised in Canaan in the patriarchal period.

³ F. Horst, op. cit., p. 147. H. Wildberger, op. cit., p. 421. R. Yaron, *Gifts in Contemplation of Death*, Oxford (1960), p. 6, says that in the OT inheritance and landed property are virtually the same thing because only inherited property belonged to a man. All other property, bought or obtained as a gift, had to be returned in the Year of Jubilee.

papyri.¹ Thus, they preserved the essential meaning of N.

In the New Testament K. can be translated 'inheritance' in most, if not all, contexts. The New Testament contribution to the word is not philological but theological. The New Testament authors depended on the meaning of K. as they knew it from everyday speech and from the Septuagint. It is the things to which K. refers that the New Testament authors made their contribution to the symbolism of the word. However, these references do not deal specifically with the definition of the word and will be dealt with later.

In summary, N. and K. can be consistently translated 'inheritance'. The legal idea behind both words, which will be discussed more thoroughly below, is that of patrimony or inherited possessions, the things which are passed from father to son.

In the Old Testament the Land is described as N. because it is the grace gift of Yahweh to His chosen people, the sons of Israel. The same idea of grace gift is carried over into the New Testament. There the Old Testament concept of Inheritance is universalised and illustrated with contemporary laws of inheritance to produce a theological concept which will be discussed below.²

B. INHERITANCE LAWS—A BACKGROUND STUDY

It is the purpose of this section to survey the inheritance laws of the Jews, Greeks, and Romans so that the prominent features of each system might be pointed out. This survey will provide a background for understanding Paul's legal allusions in regard to inheritance.

Before this survey begins, however, some general observations concerning Paul's use of illustrations from legal systems should be made.

One point that has been repeatedly demonstrated and illustrated in studies of Pauline theology is Paul's knowledge and use of Rabbinic law and theology. Any study of Pauline

¹ W. Foerster, TWBNT, III, p. 767. F. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden*, I, Berlin (1925). J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, London (1930), pp. 346-7. H. Kreller, *Erbrechtliche Untersuchungen*, Leipzig (1918), p. 58. P. Meyer, *Juristische Papyri*, Berlin (1920), p. 56.

² A more detailed discussion of the concept behind the definition of these words will be found in Chapter Two of this section.

theology should reckon with the fact that Paul had been trained as a Pharisee.¹

Another factor to be taken into account is the type of people to whom Paul was writing. His letters were written to small congregations with specific needs. These congregations contained both Jews and Gentiles, people from different backgrounds and with different understanding of the world in which they lived. With some of these congregations he did not spend a great deal of time, and what time he did spend was devoted to preaching and teaching, out of which he tried to form a common foundation of love and understanding on which the new-born church could build. It is reasonable to assume that Paul could not take the time to study local laws and customs but had to depend on general truths to illustrate the Gospel.

It must also be remembered that Paul was a Roman citizen, a status which he evidently inherited from his father. Until the end of the reign of Augustus Roman citizenship was incompatible with provincial citizenship. If a man were a Roman citizen, he was not bound by local law nor the obligation of being a citizen of the city or province in which he lived. He was not considered a member of his community and, therefore, had no rights or obligations in the community. The general rule was that the law went with the citizenship, and only later could Roman citizens in the provinces take part in the civic duties of their cities.² The Roman citizen in the provinces enjoyed the same legal status and protection as a citizen in Rome itself. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that Paul did not concern himself with local laws because they had no jurisdiction over him. He was subject, at different times in his life, only to the Torah and to Roman Law.

The point of these observations is this: in trying to determine which system of law Paul would turn to for his illustrations of his Inheritance concept, it would be the system with which he would be most familiar, which was most widespread, and which might be most familiar to the mixed congregations to whom

¹ One study among many which takes as its theme the rabbinic training of Paul is W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, London (1962). For further studies on the same theme see his excellent bibliography.

² A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, Oxford (1963), p. 181f. H. F. Jolowicz, *Historical Introduction to Roman Law*, Cambridge (1952), pp. 542-7.

his letters were addressed. The one system which fits, to a greater or lesser extent, all these categories is Roman law.

In a general way Jewish or rabbinic law could furnish the background for Paul's illustrations. With his training as a Pharisee he knew this system well and could be expected to use its main features. However, it suffers a limitation.

The Diaspora Jews were allowed to worship and practise their law by the express permission of the Roman rulers.¹ It is to be expected that they followed the Pentateuchal laws of succession and other legislation on inheritance, e.g. the rights of the first-born son. These laws, however, were applicable and effective only for Jewish communities and synagogues. The majority of the people in the congregations with whom Paul was dealing were converted Gentiles. Their knowledge of Jewish law must have been limited.

Also, many of the Diaspora Jews became Roman citizens, as did Paul's father. Therefore, they became subject to Roman law as well as rabbinic law. This would mean that they would be familiar with two systems of law. Paul could use Roman law as a common denominator. Jewish law would probably be familiar only to Jewish Christians whereas Roman law would be familiar to both Jew and Gentile converts. In other words, Jewish law is just not universal enough for Paul's purposes even though it undoubtedly provides some background and must always be taken into account.²

Hellenistic law is often mentioned as background for Paul's legal illustrations. The possibility that he used it cannot be denied, but it is the least likely of all the systems as a probable source.

Hellenistic law might be described as the sum of its parts. That is to say, each province which came through the Hellenistic period added Greek laws to its own to form its system of law. The general characteristics of these provincial laws can be called Hellenistic law.

However, Hellenistic law never became the unified structure that Roman law did. For Paul to have been dependent on

¹ B. Reicke, *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte*, Berlin (1965), pp. 67, 89-92, 105. J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, Paris (1914), tome I, pp. 218-42. W. Foerster, *Palestinian Judaism in New Testament Times*, London (1964), pp. 119-40. H. Lietzmann, *History of the Early Church*, London (1961), vol. I, p. 78f.

² It is not sufficient to argue that the Church would know Jewish laws of inheritance from the Old Testament. As will be pointed out below, OT law was in some cases radically altered by the rabbis till it bore little resemblance to OT injunctions.

Hellenistic laws, he would have had to have had some knowledge of the local laws of the province of the congregation with which he was dealing. In light of the fact that he depended on Roman law in the course of his travels,¹ it does not seem likely that he would have bothered with becoming familiar with local laws.

It appears, then, that Roman Law was the most likely source of Paul's legal illustrations. This is not to say that he was an expert on Roman Law, but only to point out that the system fulfilled his needs. Nor can it be maintained that Roman Law is the exclusive source of his legal illustrations. Certain features of inheritance laws are common to all three systems under discussion—the distribution of gifts by testament, for example. The essential thing is that the concept of heir and his inheritance is more fully developed in Roman than in Greek or Jewish law. It is this broader concept that should be examined in order to give fuller meaning and understanding to Paul's concept of Inheritance.

None of Paul's illustrations from law are detailed expositions. They are simply concrete facts of law which might be found in general form in any system of law. They are everyday instances of life upon which he draws to illustrate an act of God. Some of his illustrations are vague to the point of inaccuracy; some are very clear. However, all his illustrations can be found in Roman law, and it is to Roman law that one should turn to seek explanations.²

¹ Th. Mommsen, 'Die Rechtsverhältnisse des Apostel Paulus', ZNW, 2 (1901), pp. 81-96. See also A. N. Sherwin-White, *op. cit.*

² I do not want to go as far as A. Halmel, *Über römisches Recht im Galaterbrief*, Essen (1895), who finds a great number of parallels to Roman law in Gal. 3.15-4.7. Also, there can be little doubt that provincial law had some influence on Roman law as practised in the provinces. But, the question as to how far that influence extended can never be answered conclusively. L. Mitteis, *Reichsrecht und Volksrecht*, Leipzig (1891), claims that provincial law was not greatly effected by Roman law but, on the contrary, influenced and altered Roman law to a great extent, especially inheritance laws (pp. 109-10, 355). This is too strong a position to be advocated. F. von Woess, *Das römische Recht und die Erbanwärter*, Berlin (1911), p. 144, points out that ancient inheritance laws were much the same in their main features, different in their local features. F. F. Abbott and A. C. Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire*, Princeton (1926), observe that although the legal systems of the east had influence on Roman law, Roman law prevailed in the provinces due to provincial edicts and assizes. Therefore, it can be concluded that with the chief features of legal systems essentially the same, with the relatively uniform application of Roman law by Roman rulers and courts, and with the spread of Roman citizenship, Roman law could not have suffered as much as Mitteis contends. See also H. Jolowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 545f.

1. *Jewish Laws of Inheritance*

The Jewish laws of inheritance deal mostly with intestate succession. If a man died without leaving a will, rabbinic law thoroughly covered distribution of his property.¹

Certain general rules of succession prevailed: (1) The line of succession laid down in Num. 27.8-11, could not be directly violated²; (2) the first-born son receives a double portion (Deut. 21.15-17); (3) the father takes precedence over all his offspring in the line of succession (Mishnah Baba Bathra 8.2, BT Yebamoth 40a, Baba Bathra 115a).³

On these general rules most of the other laws of inheritance can be built. However, exceptions arose, and although the inviolability of Pentateuchal law was always maintained, in reality it was superseded.

The problem arose over the distribution of gifts. It was entirely possible for a man to give away all his possessions and leave his heirs nothing. He could also distribute equal shares among his sons without regard to the law of the first-born. He could do these things as long as he did not refer to these distributions as 'inheritance' (BT Yebamoth 36a, Baba Bathra 126b). As long as a man did not directly violate the express stipulations of the Law, rabbinic law allowed him to make any testamentary distributions he wished. This meant that a man could give away as 'gifts' his entire estate to anyone, but if he designated the distribution as an 'inheritance' and tried to will it to anyone outside the persons stipulated by the Law, the distribution was invalid. The rabbis generally disapproved of any deviations from the Law, and inheritance according to the Law was the best way to distribute an estate.⁴

In general, however, the line of succession was this: the

¹ There is a sense in which it can be said that rabbinic law did not know of a 'testament'. The word *dythyky*, which is the Hebrew transliteration of the Greek *diathēkē*, means 'a written disposition of goods in contemplation of death'. See R. Yaron, op. cit., p. 19. This document took effect on the death of the testator. It did not name heirs or designate an inheritance but was mainly concerned with legacies and gifts.

² Ibid., Chapter V. See also Mishnah Baba Bathra 8.5. All references to the Mishnah are taken from H. Danby, *The Mishnah*, Oxford University Press (1933).

³ For these and other talmudic citations, I depend on *The Babylonian Talmud* (ed. I. Epstein, 18 volumes), London (1961).

⁴ G. Horowitz, *The Spirit of Jewish Law*, New York (1953), p. 400; see also pp. 411-17. It should be remembered that while oral wills might be found in the OT, written wills are a later development and were probably influenced by Roman and Hellenistic laws (p. 403).

first-born son is the heir; he takes precedence over all the other children. The descendants of the first-born take precedence over all other descendants. The descendants of the sons take precedence over those of the daughters.

A woman could inherit only if she were the sole descendant of her father. A mother never inherited the goods of her deceased children, and a daughter never inherited if there were sons. However, a daughter had to be maintained out of an estate no matter how small that estate was (BT Baba Bathra 139b).

In the Code of Maimonides the line of succession was worked out on the general rule that if a person dies, his children inherit his possessions; they take precedence, and males take precedence over females.¹

A man could sign over to his son all of his property so that in effect the son became owner of it. The son was responsible for maintenance of his parents out of the estate once it had been signed over (BT Ketuboth 49b). However, the son was not full owner of the property, because he could not dispose of it until after his father's death (BT Baba Kamma 89b). In fact, the rabbis were not sure that a man who purchased property from a son who died before his father had any legal claim to his purchase. This probably goes back to the rule that the father takes precedence over his descendants in the line of succession.

One further observation might be made. There is no conclusive evidence that adoption was practised in the Old Testament. The idea of adoption in ancient society was to provide an heir when there was none, or to effect a change in the line of succession. Since Pentateuchal law provided for succession, adoption was unnecessary and could be illegal, since the first-born could not be expressly disinherited. The legal sources in the Old Testament are silent as far as adoption is concerned.²

In summary, Jewish laws of inheritance depended upon Pentateuchal laws of succession and distribution of property

¹ J. J. Rabinowitz (trans.), *Code of Maimonides: Book of Civil Law*, 13, Yale (1949), pp. 260ff. See also L. Mitteis, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

² Against W. H. Rossell, 'New Testament Adoption—Graeco-Roman or Semitic?', *JBL*, 72 (1952), p. 233f. He lists Gen. 15.3, Exod. 2.10, Jer. 3.19, and 1 Chron. 28.6, as texts in which adoption is implied. However, none of these is a clear reference. His attempt to parallel the Nuzi practice of adoption for the cultic purpose of ancestor worship with the OT is not convincing simply because ancestor worship is not a feature of OT belief. See R. Yaron, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

but also provided means by which these laws could be circumvented. The testament was a written disposition of goods in contemplation of death. It did not name an heir nor divide an inheritance, but distributed a man's goods as gifts. Since a complete line of succession was provided by Pentateuchal law, adoption was not practised. The Law of Primogeniture was an important part of the laws of succession.

The importance of these aspects of Jewish laws of inheritance for the understanding of Paul's concept of Inheritance can be listed as follows:

1. Since *dyythyky* refers to a death-bed disposition of property and possessions, it is not likely that Paul has it in mind when he uses *diathēkē* in inheritance contexts, e.g. Gal. 3.15, 'To give a human example, brothers: no one else annuls or adds to a man's will once it has been ratified.' Here he is talking about a testament which cannot be altered by anyone but the testator himself. The death of the testator is not implied, nor can it be inferred from the verse.

2. Since intestate succession is not a prominent feature of rabbinic law, and since adoption cannot be found in the Old Testament, Paul's adoption metaphor cannot be based on Jewish law.¹

2. Graeco-Hellenistic Laws of Inheritance

It was evidently common to every ancient society that the family unit was the most important unit of society. This conclusion can be drawn from a study of ancient inheritance laws. It is generally true of ancient Greek society. There the structure of the inheritance laws demonstrates the interest in family units, for the inheritance laws were developed to protect the family organisation, the family estate, and the family worship.²

In early Greek law intestate succession was the norm.³ If a will were written, it was usually for the purpose of disinheriting someone who stood in the line of succession. It was the rule in

¹ These points and the points of importance which will be taken from the other two systems of law will be discussed and supported more fully in Section Two.

² W. J. Woodhouse, 'Adoption', E.R.E., vol. I, p. 107.

³ R. Taubenschlag, *Law of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, New York (1944), p. 140. He says that if there were no children or grandchildren, the wife inherited, and, as a last resort, the father of the deceased could inherit.

Athens to disregard that type of will in favour of the legitimate heir.¹

By Solon's law of testaments in 594 B.C., adoption was permitted in the case of the failure of the line of succession. The adopted son ensured that the family estate would not be divided up among the next-of-kin, that the cultic rites would be carried out, and that the family unit would be preserved. The adopted son was named heir either during the lifetime of the testator or by testament after his death. Adoption was, therefore, an expedient to perpetuate name and property within a family unit.²

This sacral-spiritual adoption testament was probably the earliest testament known to the Greeks. It was normally a testament drawn up while the testator was alive and well—not a death-bed disposition—to take effect immediately upon his death. It was also the common testament form until the fourth century B.C., then it began to decline in importance until there is no evidence of an adoption testament in the papyri.³

Another testament developed later than the adoption testament and eventually replaced it altogether. It was the legacy testament (*Legatentestament*). This testament developed out of a practise which has been called 'gifts in contemplation of death'.⁴ It became possible for a man who was sick unto death to bequeath to the cult a fund to ensure that proper burial and cultic rites would be provided for him after his death. This fund eliminated the sacral function of the heir, thereby eliminating the primary reason for adoption. Having established the fund, the testator could distribute his property as he wished to one or more persons without having to adopt anyone if the line of succession ended with him.⁵ This type of testament was the normal testament of the Hellenistic age.

The term used universally in the papyri to designate a last

¹ Woodhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 108. See further I. Abrahams, 'Inheritance', E.R.E., vol. VII, p. 302. J. Muirhead, *Historical Introduction to the Private Law of Rome*, Edinburgh (1886), p. 47.

² H. S. Maine, *Dissertations on Early Law*, London (1886), pp. 96, 97.

³ E. Bruck, *Die Schenkung auf Todesfall*, Breslau (1909), pp. 96-97, and *Totenteil und Seelgerät*, München (1926), pp. 275-6. E. Lohmeyer, *Diathēkē*, Leipzig (1913), pp. 13-29.

⁴ For a complete discussion of this practice see the books by E. Bruck and R. Yaron.

⁵ P. Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 57, says that the contents of the Graeco-Hellenistic testaments were mostly individual dispositions. He also claims that the testament entered Greek law with Solon's law of testaments.

will and testament is *diathēkē*. The term was adopted from Greek law.¹

The term used in Greek law to designate the heir is *klēronomos*. In the papyri this term was expanded so that it became *klēronomos kai diadochos*.² The heir was not thought of as one who received the entire legacy, all the assets and liabilities of the estate. Universal succession was not a feature of Hellenistic law. The heir was he who inherited the immoveable goods or landed property.³

Other dispositions could be made without the recipients being named heir. It was possible for the heir to receive very little, the majority of the estate having been distributed as gifts. The heir normally received a very closely defined inheritance.

In summary, early Greek law depended on intestate succession favouring male lineal descendants. The adoption testament was known as early as Solon's law of testaments, 594 B.C., and was used to ensure the continuation of the family unit and family worship. The legacy testament grew up later and wholly replaced the adoption testament, for it became possible to establish a cult fund to insure proper cultic rites and to distribute gifts according to the testator's wishes. This later type of testament is the only kind found in the papyri. The heir did not succeed universally; normally he inherited only the landed property.

The importance of these aspects of Graeco-Hellenistic laws of inheritance for the understanding of Paul's concept of Inheritance can be listed as follows:

1. Since there is no indication of an adoption type testament in the papyri, evidently adoption ceased to play a major role in Hellenistic inheritance laws. Although it is true that *huiiothesia* is found in the inscriptions and papyri, the connexion between adoption and inheritance by testament must have been weakened. If this is the case, it seems likely that Paul's adoption metaphor is not dependent on Hellenistic law.

¹ R. Taubenschlag, op. cit., p. 143. G. Quell and J. Behm, TWBNT, II, pp. 105-37. For a complete discussion see E. Lohmeyer, *Diathēkē*.

² R. Taubenschlag, *Opera Minora*, Warszawa (1959), vol. I, p. 346. P. Meyer, op. cit., p. 56. Other combinations of these words were possible, but this one is most important. By the late fourth century A.D., *klēronomos* was the testamentary heir, *diadochos* the intestate heir.

³ H. Kreller, op. cit., p. 350.

2. Since *klēronomos* usually designated the man who inherited the landed property, and did not designate a universal successor, Paul probably depended only slightly on Hellenistic inheritance law for his concept of the 'heir'. It is true that Paul speaks of certain things that the Christians inherit, but it must also be pointed out that the Christian succeeds to these things universally; that is to say, he enjoys all the benefits and obligations of being in Christ. Therefore, it must be concluded that Graeco-Hellenistic inheritance laws do not provide the full content for Paul's concept of Inheritance.

3. Roman Laws of Inheritance

Testaments appear early in Roman law. They are already known at the time of the Twelve Tables, 451-450 B.C. Since the testament existed in Attic law by the time of Solon, it is likely that the idea of the testament is of Greek origin. However, the Romans developed it far beyond anything that the Greeks knew.

The earliest testament was an oral declaration before a ruling body, the *comitia curiata*, made for the testator by the leader of that body, the *pontifex maximus*. It was dependent on the pontifex and the group for its legality, because they could reject it if they desired. This testament was the so-called *testamentum calatis comitiis*.

Since it is likely that intestate succession was the earliest form of inheritance, this will was used only if there were no immediate heirs. Intestate succession divided a man's property down as far as the gentilic unit if no next-of-kin could be found.¹ The *testamentum calatis comitiis* was used to make sure that a man's property was distributed according to his wishes. If he had no heirs, he could name a man heir in his testament. The heir would then succeed universally to the testator's possessions upon his death.² Therefore, this early testament

¹ M. Wlassak, *Studium zum altrömischen Erb- und Vermächtnisrecht*, Wien (1933), p. 14. For a complete summary of intestate succession in classical law, see F. Schulz, *Classical Roman Law*, Oxford (1951), Part Three, Chapter Two.

² R. Sohm, *et al.*, *Institutionen: Geschichte und System des römischen Privatrechts*, München (1926, 17 ed.), p. 587, ft. 27. For a discussion of universal succession see H. S. Maine, *Ancient Law*, London (1876), p. 179, and F. Rosshirt, *Das testamentarische Erbrecht bei den Römern*, Heidelberg (1840), pp. 117-18. 'Universal succession' is not a term found in the classical lawyers, but legal historians have used it to describe the legal condition of the heir. He succeeded to all rights and duties,

was essentially an adoption testament. As with the Greeks adoption was carried out to ensure the maintenance of family property and family sacral rites.¹

It was not necessary that a single person be named heir. It was entirely possible for a group, which by law was considered a single unit, to inherit. They would be considered co-heirs.²

Another type of testament was the much less formal military testament, the *testamentum in procinctu*. This was an oral declaration made during the sacral rites preceding battle to the men standing near the testator. These two testaments, *calatis comitiis* and *in procinctu*, were the only two types known to the Twelve Tables.³

A third type of will was developed later and became the ordinary testament of the classical period. It was the so-called *testamentum per aes et libram*, the testament of the bronze and balances. It entailed a very definite ritual in which a man turned over his whole estate to a mediator or manager, the *familiae emptor*, with oral instructions as to how he wanted it distributed after his death. This declaration, the *nuncipatio*, was made in front of five witnesses, the man who held the balances, and the *familiae emptor*. The *emptor* symbolically bought the estate by striking the balances with the bronze. This testament took effect on the death of the testator.⁴

By the time of the late Republic this ritual had no real significance. It had to be performed, however, in order to make the testament valid. The *familiae emptor* became simply a

all assets and liabilities of the deceased. An inheritance is the succession to the entire legal position of the deceased. This was so even for the co-heirs. Any debts were to be paid out of their portion of the inheritance according to the proportion which they received. For example, if an heir received half the estate, he had to pay half the total debt of the estate. Heir and successor are interchangeable terms. Those who received legacies were not successors nor were they heirs. They received only benefits and were not obligated for the debts of the deceased, therefore half of the definition of 'heir' was missing for them. See further, F. Schulz, *op. cit.*, p. 212, and H. F. Jolowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

¹ E. Nisoli, *Die Testamenteröffnung im römischen Recht*, Bern dissertation (1952), p. 22. There is some discussion as to what class of persons the early *heres* might have been. V. Korosec, *Erbhaftung nach römischem Recht*, Leipzig (1927), p. 29, says that the adopted heir was someone outside the family or gentile unit. W. Liebenthal, *Ursprung und Entwicklung des römischen Testaments*, Greifswald dissertation, Berlin (1914), pp. 43ff, claims that the *heres* in the ancient testament was always an orphan adopted into the testator's family; this was the meaning of the word. In any case, it appears that the early testamentary heir was an adopted person.

² H. S. Maine, *Ancient Law*, pp. 174ff.

³ F. Schulz, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁴ H. Jolowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 253. F. Schulz, *op. cit.*, pp. 240ff.

figurehead. He had never been considered *heres*¹ and in classical times he lost even his managerial function. He served just as another witness.

The essential job of the classical testament was to appoint an heir. Other dispositions could be made, but without the appointment of the heir, the entire testament was void.² There might have been more than one heir named, but the testator could not make one son heir of his property and one heir of his money. Each heir succeeded to a fraction of the total estate.³

The testator must not only expressly designate an heir or heirs, he had to be careful to expressly disinherit any member of his family whom he did not want to share in the inheritance. If the testator distributed portions of his estate which added up to less than the total estate, the entire testament is void if he had forgotten to disinherit members of his family to whom he wished to leave nothing. The total estate had to be divided among expressly designated heirs.⁴

It was possible for a man to invalidate a valid will by making another valid will. The later will superseded the earlier. The process for making a new will was involved, however, for it required repeating the entire mancipation ritual with its witnesses, bronze and balance, and *familiae emptor*.

In the Praetorian wills of the late Republic the testator could invalidate his will by destroying the tablets upon which it had been written, since the possession of the goods and property could be given to the people named within the will only according to the directions on the tablets (*bonorum possessio secundum tabulas*). However, since a mancipation will was oral, it could not be lost or destroyed, and only another valid mancipation will could replace it.

The *testamentum per aes et libram* was a form of mancipation, or the transfer of one man's property to another. The testator 'sold' his estate, present and future, to the *familiae emptor*. This act of sale was symbolic, but in adoption by mancipation, called *adrogatio*, the transference of goods was actual.

By means of adrogation an independent Roman citizen came under the *patria potestas* of another Roman citizen.⁵ The form

¹ F. Schulin, *Das griechische Testament verglichen mit dem Römischen*, Basel (1882), p. 57.

² R. Sohm, *op. cit.*, p. 597.

³ F. Schulz, *op. cit.*, pp. 213ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

⁵ *Patria potestas* is the power of the head of a family, the *pater familias*, over the members of his family. It was virtually unlimited in judicial, economic and moral

of mancipation was followed and the independent citizen who was to be adrogated was bought by the testator and became his son and heir. The family of the adopted merged with the family of the new father, and both the adopted and his family came under the *patria potestas* of the new father.

This form of adoption continued more or less the same throughout Roman legal history, and at a later time it was possible for a man to adopt another man's son, a *filius familias*, rather than an independent citizen.¹

There are two possible terms to designate a man's inheritance, *heredium* and *hereditas*. The former is an old term which by tradition goes back to Romulus. According to legend he distributed to each Roman citizen a plot of land (*iugera*) which was inalienable and indivisible. The *heredium* was a patrimony.² The latter word is the more common word for 'Inheritance'. It designates the goods, rights, and duties which the heir assumes when he enters into the legal position of the deceased. *Hereditas* is the whole estate which is passed on to the heir or heirs.³

In summary, the testament was a very important part of the Roman laws of inheritance. Of the three types of testaments, the mancipation testament was the most common; it was the ordinary will of the classical period. The essential job of the classical testament was the institution of the heir. He—there could be more than one—succeeded universally to the legal position of the testator. He enjoyed all the benefits and was obligated for all the liabilities of the estate which he inherited. Adoption was a regular feature of Roman law.

The importance of these aspects of the Roman laws of inheritance for the understanding of Paul's concept of Inheritance can be listed as follows:

1. Since testamentary adoption for the sake of inheritance—adoption so that a man would not die without successors within his family—is a feature of Roman law, Paul's adoption metaphor is probably based on it. It is possible that in the

fields, and it was effective for the lifetime of the *pater familias* regardless of the age of the other members of the family.

¹ W. W. Buckland and A. D. McNair, *Roman Law and Common Law*, Cambridge (1952), p. 42. See also H. Jolowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 119ff, 145ff, and F. Schulz, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-8.

² M. Kaser, *Eigentum und Besitz im älteren römischen Recht*, Weimar (1943), p. 236. H. Jolowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-1.

³ For the definition of these words and other Roman legal terms used in this section, see A. Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law*, Philadelphia (1953).

'redemption of a slave' metaphor in Gal. 4.3-7, Paul could be thinking of adrogation. Christ is the means by which men are bought out from the *patria potestas* of the *stoicheia tou kosmou* and placed under the *patria potestas* of God the Father. The witness to this purchase is the Holy Spirit. However, whether this allusion is present in these verses or not, Roman law provides the best background for Paul's concept of adoption.

2. Since the heir or heirs succeeded universally to the whole estate of the deceased, it is likely that Paul uses Roman law for his heir metaphor. The Christian is the heir of God. He inherits the promises of Abraham. However, he is also subject to the liabilities of heirship. He suffers with Christ. If a Roman citizen wanted to bequeath a man only assets, he did not name him heir, but Paul calls the man in Christ an heir, therefore a successor to the benefits of the Kingdom and to the obligations of being in Christ. Only the concept of the 'heir' in Roman law is complete enough to express what Paul means in Gal. 4 and Rom. 8.

3. Although Roman law is like Greek and Jewish law in the designation of the inheritance as landed property or immoveable goods, it goes a step further and conceives of the inheritance as the total estate which is passed on to the heirs. Paul probably has this broader concept of inheritance in mind when he speaks of the inheritance of the Christians. The inheritance is the Promise of God to His people, but it is also the fulness of God's blessing in Christ. The 'landed property' might be described as the New Creation, the 'whole estate' as the Kingdom of God.

C. A SHORT COMPARISON OF INHERITANCE LAWS

It is essentially the job of the inheritance laws which have been discussed to ensure that the property of a family remains the possession of the family unit. In each system, although means are provided by which a man might dispose of his possessions outside his family, the central idea is to ensure the continuity of the family property within the family unit. This is the main reason for the rise of the testament in Greek and Roman law, and the essential job of the institution of the laws

of succession in the Old Testament and rabbinic law. However, there are some differences which can be noted.

Old Testament and rabbinic laws of inheritance were based on the theory of intestate succession. Greek and Roman law, however, preferred testamentary succession. Graeco-Hellenistic testaments, even though mainly concerned with disposition of gifts, still named men 'heirs' and defined the 'inheritance'. In Roman society intestate succession was disliked, and it was customary for a man to make a will at an early age. The rabbis, however, provided only for distribution of gifts outside the line of succession and favoured the law of primogeniture, which had little influence in Greek and Roman law. Male lineal descendants were favoured in each system, but only in Jewish law did the first-born hold a guaranteed position of honour.

Testamentary adoption was common in classical times only among the Romans. Because of the intricate system of succession worked out by the rabbis, and because of the elimination of the sacral office of the heir through the establishment of the cult fund by the Hellenistic Greeks, adoption played no major role in these two systems.

Only the Roman heir succeeded universally to the estate of the deceased. This does not mean that he inherited all that a man owned, but he did inherit the whole 'inheritance', all assets and liabilities of the deceased. Universal succession is not a feature of Graeco-Hellenistic or Jewish laws of inheritance. In those systems the heir usually received only the landed property. There is no indication that he was liable for the debts of the estate or in any way assumed the legal position of the deceased.

There are, of course, other differences among the systems of inheritance laws under discussion; however, primogeniture, adoption and universal succession are among the major features which occur in Paul's concept of Inheritance. An understanding of their legal meaning is helpful for a comprehensive understanding of the inheritance ideas which appear in his letters.

D. GENERAL SUMMARY

It has been the purpose of this chapter to outline broadly and

define the terminology and ideas of Inheritance in the Old Testament, New Testament, and ancient society without elaborating on the theological concept of Inheritance. It has been shown that N. is consistently used in the Old Testament in reference to the Land which Yahweh gave to the tribes of Israel. The Land was a patrimony, the inalienable possession of the families, tribes and nation of Israel. The Land was Israel's inheritance which was given to them by God the Father because they were His children.

K. can also be translated as 'inheritance' because it has this meaning in the Septuagint and papyri. However, the New Testament adds to the Old Testament's 'inheritance' of the Promised Land allusions from contemporary laws of Inheritance. Some of these allusions are the laws of primogeniture, adoption and universal succession. This amalgamation of ideas produces a far broader concept of Inheritance than is present in the Old Testament.

It has also been mentioned that Paul was primarily dependent on Roman law for his legal illustrations. This dependence is not exclusive, for certainly Paul was influenced by his Jewish training and Hellenistic thought. To be sure, Paul was not a lawyer; as a result some of his legal illustrations are general and vague. However, Roman law is to be chosen as the background for his illustrations because of its primacy in the ancient world and because of the fuller development of its concepts.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF INHERITANCE

THIS chapter is devoted to a general study of the biblical concept of Inheritance. It will attempt to trace the idea of Inheritance through the Old Testament, intertestamental literature, and New Testament and delineate its major aspects. Although the legal ideas of Inheritance will be dealt with, the primary concern of the chapter is to show the theological outline of Inheritance.

By the end of the chapter two things should be apparent. First, the concept of the heir is integrally a part of the concept of Inheritance, and it is the witness of the Bible that the heirs of God are the people of God. Secondly, the Inheritance is generally considered to be the Promised Land, either the land of Canaan or the Kingdom of God.

A. THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF INHERITANCE

It is the witness of the Old Testament that the inheritance of the land of Canaan is based on the promises which God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Because of God's concern for these promises, He led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the Land which He had sworn to give to their fathers (Exod. 13.5, 11; Deut. 1.8, 6.10, *et passim*). On account of the Promise the children of Israel were not destroyed in the wilderness, but God allowed their descendants to come into the Land (Exod. 32.13, 33.1; Num. 14.16, 23; 32.11). So, the Inheritance of the Land under Joshua was dependent on God's Promise to Abraham, a Promise which had been renewed to each generation of his descendants.¹

The major Promise passages are Gen. 12, 15 and 17. In the first passage God commands Abram to abandon his land and family and go to a Land which He will show him. There God will make of him a great nation.

¹ For a discussion oriented particularly to 'land' promises, see F. W. Marquardt, *Die Bedeutung der Biblischen Landverheissungen für die Christen*, TEH, 116, München (1964), pp. 13-23.

The promise that God will make of Abram a great nation (12.2) is dependent on the promise that Abram will have a Land of his own (13.14). The combination of land and nation is essentially interdependent. The land cannot be possessed and held without a large group of people to do so, and the descendants of Abram cannot be a great nation without a land in which a national existence can be established.¹ Therefore, when Abraham questions God about Eliezer being his successor (*yôreš*, 15.2-3), God's promise to give Abraham a son and subsequent numerous descendants is followed by a covenant outlining the borders of the land which God will provide.²

The Promise of the possession of the Land is found throughout the rest of Genesis, being repeated to Abraham (13.14-16, 15.18-21, 17.8, 22 17), Isaac (26.3-4, 24), and Jacob (28.3f, 13-15, 35.9-12, 46.3, 48.4). Always the fulfilment of the promise to make of Abraham and his descendants a great nation is predicated on the possession of the Land which God had sworn to give them.

Since the Patriarchs never fully possessed the Land, the description of the Land as the land of their wanderings entered into early traditions (Gen. 15.18, 17.8). Probably the tradition that Abraham bought a piece of land in Canaan in which to bury Sarah—land which later became the burying place of Isaac, Rebekah, Leah and Jacob (Gen. 49.3)—was preserved to show that the patriarchs possessed the land in death. The small plot of Canaan in which they were buried was theirs by right of sale. Symbolically this purchased land was a present fulfilment of the promised full possession in the future.³

Besides this symbolic fulfilment, it is possible to say that the patriarchs enjoyed legal possession of the Land. David Daube⁴

¹ L. A. Snijders, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

² J. Hofijzer, *Die Verheissung an die drei Erzväter*, Leiden (1956), p. 12. E. A. Speiser, '“People” and “Nation” of Israel', *JBL*, 79 (1960), pp. 157-63, has pointed out that in the OT the children of Israel are referred to as God's '*am*' and His '*gôy*'. One term is subjective ('*am*'); one is objective ('*gôy*'). Israel had to be both. It was not enough to be God's people. Israel needed the status and stability of being a nation in order to carry out God's purposes. While I will not commit myself to Speiser's exegesis of the words, I will agree that there is a large measure of truth to the idea that he wishes to convey. Israel as a collection of peoples or tribes was weak and ineffective. Only when they could be organised into a nation in a land of their own could they become God's effective instrument. Hence the glory of the Exodus was the promise of the Land, and the horror of the Exile was the loss of the Land.

³ G. von Rad, *Genesis*, London (1961), p. 245.

⁴ D. Daube, *Studies in Biblical Law*, Cambridge (1947), pp. 25-39.

says that in Oriental law it was possible to transfer land or other property to a man simply by showing it to him. It had to be the intent of the owner to give the land to the promisee, and if the intent were there, the transfer was effected by pointing out the land and promising to give it over. The transfer might not be actual. Another ceremony might be held in which money was paid and the deed exchanged, but the land was legally the possession of the beholder from the moment it was pointed out to him.¹

By this means Abraham was made legal owner of the Promised Land, at least in the eyes of the authors of the Old Testament. The Land had been promised to him by God. God also told him to look over the land and walk in it, because it was the Land which God would give him and his descendants (Gen. 13.14f, 15.17f, 17.8). By means of the Promise the Land was legally transferred to Isaac, Jacob and their descendants (Genesis 35.12). Finally, it is likely that the idea of the beholding of the Land by Moses is, at least in part, to transfer the Land to him and the children of Israel. Therefore, the Land legally belonged to Abraham and his descendants even though actual possession was not to come until the time of Joshua.

The Land is characterised as the 'inheritance' throughout the rest of the Old Testament. It is the Inheritance of Israel because it was passed down to Abraham's descendants by the Promise. God told Jacob that he would not lose the Promise by going into Egypt (Gen. 46.2-4). Moses was called on account of the Promise (Exod. 3.7ff). Therefore, the Land is described as the inheritance of the families, tribes, and nation of Israel because it was the sure possession of their fathers, and they are their heirs.

Numbers and Joshua characteristically speak of the inheritance of the families and tribes as land which was divided out to them by lot. Num. 26.52ff and 34.2, 13, speak of the Land which is the N. of the tribes collectively, but this collective Land is to be divided out by lot among the tribes. However, the primary idea of N. is not 'allotment', but 'inherited possession'.²

There is a real difference. The Land was given to the

¹ For rabbinic confirmation of this practice, see H. Freedman and M. Simon (editors), *Midrash Rabba: Genesis*, London (1939), vol. I, p. 339.

² Against C. E. B. Cranfield, 'Inherit', RTWB, New York (1961), p. 112.

Patriarchs by means of God's Promise. Since the Promise of God gave legal possession of the Land to them and their descendants, the Land was, in a very real sense, the Inheritance of Israel. The Land which had been given by God to the Fathers was being inherited by their children. The casting of the lots was merely an expedient for dividing the inheritance. The portions of Land which were received by the tribes as a result of this allotment can be called 'allotted portions', but they were allotted portions out of a collective Inheritance. In other words, the allotment provided an inheritance for the tribes out of the Inheritance of Israel.

In Deuteronomy, the Psalms, and the Prophets the Land is characteristically spoken of as the N. of Israel. The distinction between the different tribal lands as the N. of those tribes is absent. This is no doubt due in part to the rise of the monarchy, the split off of the Northern Kingdom, and the Exile. It became impossible to maintain tribal boundaries and descriptions of family property. Therefore, the Promised Land was thought of only in terms of being the Inheritance of all of Israel.¹

This emphasis on the collective Land also demonstrates that individual portions of land distributed by lot cannot be regarded as the primary idea of N. The Deuteronomist, Psalmists, and Prophets looked back to the Abrahamic Promise which spoke of the possession of the entire Land of Canaan. They reaffirm that the Land which God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the Inheritance of their descendants, even if those descendants can only be considered a remnant. Hence, the development of the idea of the Land as Inheritance does not begin with the allotted portions in Numbers and Joshua, but with the Promise to Abraham. The whole Land of the Abrahamic Promise is the N. of all of Israel. The allotted portions are individual plots of land which become the patrimony of the tribes, but it is a patrimony out of land which is already the inheritance of the descendants of Abraham. Chronologi-

¹ G. von Rad, *Das Gottesvolk*, p. 43f, maintains that in Deuteronomy N. becomes the chief expression for divine blessing because of its reference to the Promised Land. The blessing was the physical gift of the Land; that is why every Israelite had a share in the N. I might also point out that this is probably the reason for the admonition in Deuteronomy to observe strictly the commandments. The Land which had been given by God should not be made unclean or defiled in any way (Deut. 21.23, 24.4). In almost every context in which N. occurs in Deuteronomy, the admonition to obey the Law of God also occurs (Deut. 4.1-10, 15.4-5; 19.8-10). The blessing of God, the Land, must be kept pure and clean.

cally speaking, that which Abraham could not do, apportion his land among his descendants, was done for him later by God by means of the lot. The allotment was a secondary feature in that the tribes conceived of the Land as theirs by virtue of the fact that it belonged to their fathers. Administratively it was expedient to decide boundaries so that the tribes would not encroach on the inheritance of their brothers. The allotment is the inheritance within the Inheritance. Therefore, the primary concept of the Land as the N. of Israel is restated by Deuteronomy, the Psalms, and the Prophets; primary because it is a restatement of the Promise to Abraham.

It has already been pointed out in Chapter One that N. designates an inalienable possession. Examples cited in support of this were: (1) the legislation of the year of Jubilee which guaranteed the return of land which had had to be sold to the original owner or his descendants; and (2) the story of Naboth and Ahaz. The Levites were mentioned because the idea of inalienable possession was present in a context outside of the Promised Land context. Their inheritance was the service to the Lord and the worship offerings which the other tribes brought to God. These things were to be held in perpetuity by them; therefore, they were inalienable possessions.

Another example demonstrating the idea of inalienability inherent in N. is the legislation concerning the daughters of Zelophad. Even though they were daughters, therefore disqualified from being heirs or holding land, they were given an inheritance in the Land on the condition that they marry within their tribe. By marriage their land would pass into the possession of their husbands, so in order to keep the land within the tribe, their husbands had to be members of their own tribe. They could not take their inheritance away from the inheritance of the larger group (Num. 27.1-7, 36.1-12). Every man was to keep the inheritance of his fathers (Num. 36.7, 10).

One further example of inalienability should be cited. This one is found in Deuteronomy and is an exception to the general rule outlined above that N. in Deuteronomy refers to the collective Land. In Deut. 19.14, the inalienability of the land is protected by the admonition not to change the ancient landmarks which mark off each man's inheritance.¹

¹ For further discussion, see A. Alt, *Kleine Schriften*, München (1953ff), pp. 349ff.

In a larger sense not only are the individual inheritances of the Israelites inalienable, but for the authors of the Old Testament the N. of Israel as a whole was also inalienable. There are at least two ways of demonstrating this. First is the fact that Canaan was considered to be the N. of God (Exod. 15.17; Joshua 22.19; Isa. 47.6; Jer. 2.7; *et passim*). The Land is the property and possession of God. Israel enjoys possession of the Land only because God wills to give it to her. Israel is the son of God (Exod. 4.22-23; Jer. 3.19, 31.9, 20; Hos. 11.1). As son it receives the Land as an inheritance from the Lord, and this inheritance is ultimately inalienable.¹

This leads to and overlaps the second fact. The possession of the Land is based on the Promise of God to Abraham, or, in a wider sense, it is dependent on God's election of His People. God's promises are sure, so Israel will one day 'inherit the land'. The Promise was passed from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to the people of the Exodus. The same Promise can be passed on and sustained among God's children in spite of division, defeat, and exile. Yahweh will not desert His people. They are His N. (1 Kings 8.51, 53; 2 Kings 21.14; Mic. 7.18; Ps. 33.12), even when reduced to a remnant (Isa. 63.17; Jer. 10.16; Ps. 74.2), and the possession of the Land is sure because of His compassion for them (Jer. 12.14-17, 16.14-15, 50.19; Ezek. 36.8-15).

Therefore, both the individual patrimony of an Israelite family and the whole Land of Israel were looked on as inalienable possessions because both were the gift of Yahweh to the Israelites based on the unchangeable promises which God had made to the Patriarchs.²

On the basis of the foregoing discussion it is obvious that N. is used in the Old Testament both objectively and spiritually. Its primary spiritual use is in reference to the land of Canaan and the people of Israel as the N. of Yahweh. Both Land and People are the special, inalienable possession of God and enjoy the privileges of God's special care.

The most common spiritual use of N. is in reference to the Land as the N. of Yahweh. This designation occurs numerous

¹ See discussion of land laws in W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, London (1962), vol. I, pp. 96-97.

² Cf. W. Eichrodt, *Israel in der Weissagung des Alten Testament*, Zürich (1951), pp. 18-19, who points out that every Israelite, by means of cultic practices, knew that the land didn't belong to him but was a gift which had to be renewed by God.

times in the Psalms and the Prophets. The roots of this idea lie in the fact that God is the giver of the Land. It is His patrimony so to speak. The Land will always be His; it is His N. because it is His inalienable possession.¹

The other spiritual use of N. is that of the People of Israel as the N. of God. The idea behind this use is that the People are the inalienable possession of God because of His election, grace, and love for them. Because God had chosen and loved Israel, they were His 'inheritance'. Even though there were times when He seemed far off and unconcerned, He could not turn away indefinitely. He had an obligation to Israel as the heir is obligated to care for his inheritance.²

In these contexts, therefore, N. is used as a metaphor for the assurance of God's everlasting care. Even if only a remnant of the People is God's N., they are assured of God's continued love for them. Grace and election are very closely connected with this use of N.³

It is likely that the idea of the Land and People as the N. of Yahweh grows out of the tension of the failure by the tribes to gain full possession of the Promised Land, and later out of the division of the kingdom and subsequent exiles. With the removal of the tribes from their Inheritances and with the possession of the Land by other nations, the original N. of the families and tribes could no longer be maintained. Some other basis for the guarantee that every Israelite would share in the blessings of the Land had to be found. Therefore, the Land and People were designated God's 'inheritance', His abiding possessions. He was the guarantee that the Promise to the Fathers would be fulfilled.

In summary, throughout the Old Testament the Lord is the Giver of the Inheritance. His original gift was by means of the Promise to the Patriarchs. There was no basis for this gift other than the grace of God's election. From that point on, however, the judicial—theological presupposition of inheritance was that of sonship. The promise was renewed to Abraham's

¹ See also the discussion in F. Horst, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-3.

² H. Wildberger, *Jahwes Eigentumsvolk*, Zürich (1960), p. 78f, points out that the emphasis of N. in reference to Israel as the N. of Yahweh is not so much as a possession which one inherits, but on something which is a continuing possession. I have tried to express the same idea by the word 'inalienable'.

³ P. Hammer, *The Understanding of Inheritance in the New Testament*, Heidelberg dissertation, (1958, unpublished), pp. 23, 132, says that grace and election are inseparable from the inheritance terms both in the OT and NT.

'legitimate' son Isaac, then to Isaac's son Jacob, and then to the 'children of Israel'. If God elected the people of Israel, it was because they were the sons of the Patriarchs whom He chose to serve Him.

The Old Testament authors refer to the Land as the N. of the families, tribes and nation of Israel. When the tribes took possession of the Land under Joshua, they inherited the Land in two ways. First, they succeeded to the inheritance of their Fathers. The Land was the land which God had sworn to give them. The tribes took possession of that which had been given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Secondly, they allotted to each tribe individual portions of Land which were to be the N. of the families and tribes. In both cases the Land was inalienable because it was the grace gift of God to their Fathers and to them. In the case of the N. of the individual, legislation was provided to protect its inalienability. In the case of the N. of all Israel, it was considered the gift of God to His son, Israel. It was God's patrimony which he would not allow to be taken away from His son.

So, the eschatological possession of the Land which is so prominent in the intertestamental literature and the New Testament takes form. If God will not bring full possession of the Land about in this world, He will do it in the World to Come. The Exile cannot be God's final plan for Israel, for both the Land and the People of Israel are God's N., His inalienable possessions. He will drive out of the Land all the enemies of Israel; and His people, even though a remnant, will come back and enjoy possession of the Inheritance (Jer. 3.18, 12.14-17; Isa. 49.8ff, 58.13-14; Joel 4.2).

Therefore, the Old Testament concept of Inheritance is that of an inalienable possession which is inherited on the basis of God's election of and promises to the Patriarchs, dependent on God's electing grace and love in the present, and fully possessed only in the future.

B. THE CONCEPT OF INHERITANCE IN THE INTERTESTAMENTAL LITERATURE

For the most part the writings of late Judaism adhere to the Old Testament concept of Inheritance. They maintain that the Abrahamic Promise is the basis for the possession of the

Land, that the Land is the Inheritance of individuals, the nation, and God, and that the people of Israel are the inheritance of God. Due to certain developments in the theology of the period, however, further references are added and old references are broadened. This is the period of the supremacy of the Law, the rise of eschatological speculation, and the development of apocalyptic description. These things exert an influence on the concept of Inheritance in the period of late Judaism.

1. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*

In the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha the Land continues to hold a high place of importance and continues to be referred to as the inheritance of individuals, Israel and Yahweh (1 Macc. 2.56f, 6.24, 15.33; Judith 4.12, 8.23, 16.21; Jubilees 8.10ff, 49.19; Test. of Dan 7.3; Test. of Issacar 5.7; Ps. of Sol. 7.2, 9.1).¹ The people of God continue to be regarded as the inheritance of the Lord (Judith 13.15; Jubilees 1.19-21, 22.9-15, 33.20; 2 Baruch 5.1), and the inheritance and the possession of the Land continue to be regarded as based on the Promise to Abraham (Jubilees 14.1ff, 18.15ff; Sirach 44.11, 19, 45.20-22; Tobit 4.12).

A certain minor change in old legislation regarding the inalienability of the land is introduced. Sirach 42.3, says that a man should not be ashamed of the division of his inheritance. In light of the fact that it was impossible to re-establish old family and tribal property lines in post-exilic times, this relaxation of the division of a patrimony is only to be expected.²

Certain other features regarding Inheritance were added to the Old Testament concept. Due to the Exile and the fact that the returning Israelites could never satisfactorily resettle themselves, at least two developments concerning the concept of Inheritance arose. The Law and Wisdom became the Inherit-

¹ All references are based on R. H. Charles (ed.), *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 volumes, Oxford (1913).

² The *Midrash Rabba: Numbers* (H. Freedman and M. Simon, ed.) on Num. 27.7 says, 'In connexion with the inheritance of sons it says, Ye Shall Give, while in connexion with daughters it says, Ye Shall Cause To Pass. This indicated that a daughter can transfer an inheritance from one tribe to another. And I Shall Be Unto The Children Of Israel A Statute Of Judgment. The expression Judgment implies that inheritance can only change hands through judges' (London: 1939, p. 840). Besides being a direct contradiction of biblical law, this further demonstrates the breakdown of OT inheritance laws in post-exilic times.

ance of Israel, and the possession of the Land-inheritance was put off until the Eschaton.

The connexion of Wisdom and N. can be seen in canonical literature in Eccles. 7.11, but in that passage Wisdom is not the inheritance but a companion to inheritance.

The connexion of Wisdom—which is identified with the Law in intertestamental literature¹—and Inheritance finds full expression in Sirach 4.11-19, 24.1-34. In these passages Wisdom takes up residence among the 'inheritance' of the Lord, the people of Israel. She establishes herself and pours forth blessings on those who seek her. If a man trusts in Wisdom, which can be found in the Law which Moses gave as an inheritance to the people of Israel, he will inherit her. Also, Wisdom has an inheritance in Israel and will, evidently, always be present among the people of God. Since the inheritance of the Land is no longer a present reality, Sirach says that the Law, which is a present reality, has been given by God through Moses as an inheritance for the people.²

The Law was described as the inheritance of the people of Israel for at least two reasons. First, because of its increasing importance in post-exilic theology, it developed the qualities of an inheritance. It was described as given by God through Moses and passed on through generations of Israelites. The rabbis even argued that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob observed it before it was given. It became, therefore, the special possession of the children of Abraham, a patrimony, an inheritance.

Secondly, it was through the present observance of the Law that the future possession of the Land was guaranteed. The Law was the key to the Inheritance. Therefore, it could be described as the present inheritance of the people since observance of the Law was as near to possession of the blessings and salvation brought by unfettered dwelling in the Land as the Israelites could get. The Law replaced the present possession of the Land as the assurance of God's favour and could, therefore, be called the present inheritance. The Inheritance, however, remained the Land with all its blessings.

The second and more widespread development of the concept is the placing of the full possession of the Land in the Eschaton. This can be explained as a natural development

¹ N. Dahl, *Das Volk Gottes*, Oslo (1941), p. 78.

² For further discussion see P. Hammer, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

from the failure of the tribes to fully possess the Land. Even in Joshua, where in one place it claims that all God's promises to Israel had been fulfilled (21.43-45), there are repeated exhortations to take full possession of the Land. With the disaster of the destruction of the Northern Kingdom, and with the defeat and exile of the Southern Kingdom, earthly fulfilment was assigned to the spiritual realm of the Coming Aeon.

Not only is the possession of the Land put off until the Coming Aeon (Ps. of Sol. 17.23-51; Enoch 39.62) but also the whole earth becomes the inheritance of the children of Israel (Jubilees 17.3, 22.14, 32.19; Enoch 5.7).¹ In the eschatological-apocalyptic thought of late Judaism the 'earth' that was to be inherited was an earth purified from all uncleanness, sometimes by fire. However, Palestine, with Jerusalem and Zion, was still considered to be the Inheritance of Israel (Tobit 4.2; Jubilees 49.19; Sirach 44.11).

This combination of the earth and Palestine as the Inheritance of the pious can be explained by the fact that Palestine was considered to be the centre of God's saving activity. The holiness and salvation that was centred in Palestine stretched out over the whole world.² The whole world was inherited because of the effective holiness of Israel. This holiness made the rest of the earth holy and, therefore, inheritable. The expression *klēronomein tēn gēn* probably has its roots in the conception of Palestine as the land of salvation.³

Therefore, it might be said that for the authors of the intertestamental literature the expression 'to inherit the earth' was synonymous with 'salvation', for it implied not just taking possession of the earth, but also having a share in Palestine and the salvation centred there.⁴

Certain conditions attached themselves to the fulfilment of the Promise. Observance of the Law became of paramount importance. This and doing good deeds became the central theme of Judaism after 400 B.C. It came to be believed that the

¹ For further references and discussion see H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash*, München (1961, 3rd ed.), vol. I, p. 199. (Henceforth referred to as Bill., with volume and page number.)

² P. Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*, Tübingen (1934), pp. 410-13. N. Dahl, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

³ P. Volz, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

⁴ It might almost be said that for the authors of late Judaism it was possible to inherit Palestine without the earth, but not the earth without Palestine. Palestine, the Promised Land, was the inheritance on which all other inheritances depend.

national hope of establishing the nation of God's people in the Land which God had promised them could not be achieved until all the people lived in accordance with the Law.¹ For example, Psalms of Solomon declares that only the pious will inherit the promises of the Lord (12.7, 14.10).

This is not to say that physical descent from Abraham was not also a prerequisite for sharing in the Inheritance. The election of the children of Israel still plays an important part in the concept of Inheritance. In the end time it will be evident that God has a special love for Israel, so that all Israel will inherit a share in the Coming Aeon.² However, Israel is to be a pure, clean, and holy nation, and no uncleanness should appear in the inheritance of the Lord (Jubilees 33.20). Only the observance of the Law will provide the purity necessary for inheritance (cp. 2 Macc. 2.14-17).

Inheritance takes on other eschatological and apocalyptic references. To name a few: according to Enoch 71.16, inheritance is dependent upon the Son of Man. New Testament terminology turns up in apocalyptic contests so that the righteous inherit 'life'³ (Sibylline Fragment II, 46-49; Ps. of Sol. 14.10; Enoch 40.9), receive the 'eternal inheritance' (2 Enoch 9.1, 10.4-6), will be the inheritors of endless time or the promised time (2 Enoch 66.6; 2 Baruch 44.13), or will inherit that which is to come (4 Ezra 7.9b). All these expressions are used to designate the possession of those who take part in the future salvation.

In summary, in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha the references of the Old Testament concept of Inheritance are retained and certain features are added. Hence the Inheritance can be the People, the Land, the Law, Wisdom, Eternal Life, or the World. Also the Old Testament conditions for receiving the inheritance are retained along with the addition of other features. So, the basis for inheritance is physical descent, observance of the Law, good deeds, or residence in relation to Palestine.

The Land continues to hold its place of importance in the

¹ R. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times*, New York (1949), p. 49. G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, Harvard (1927), vol. II, p. 78.

² P. Volz, op. cit., p. 343. G. F. Moore, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 398, 542.

³ Ibid., p. 363. Volz says that the term 'life' in the literature of late Judaism becomes the collective term for future salvation, the sum of the goods of the coming aeon.

concept of Inheritance, but the content of the Land-inheritance is eschatologised. It is a pure and holy Palestine that the righteous inherit in the Coming Aeon.

2. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*

The Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit a mixture of using the Old Testament concept of Inheritance and of developing a concept very much their own.

In regard to the continuation of the Old Testament concept: the Land is designated as the inheritance of God (1 QH 6.8; 1 QM 12.12, 19.4). The Formulary of Blessings (1 QSb 3.28) says that the priests are to inherit the first-fruits; this, of course, refers to the inheritance of the Levites which included offerings. N. is also used in biblical quotes, thus the Damascus Document (CD 1.16) alludes to Deut. 19.14, and the commentary on Ps. 37 (4 QpPs 37, 3.10) says that the poor will inherit the earth.

There can also be found the Old Testament idea that God is the Giver of the Inheritance, but the author of the War Scroll (1 QM 10.15) seems to have depended on a development of this idea which appears in other literature in late Judaism. The author of Jubilees (8.10-12, 29) attributes to God the apportioning of the inheritances of all the peoples of the earth. God is the Giver not only of Israel's inheritance, but also of the inheritance of every nation. This same idea is used by the author of the War Scroll.

A concept of inheritance unique to the Dead Sea Scrolls can be found mixed in with the ideas of predestination and dualism which characterises a section in the Manual of Discipline which has been called 'the treatise on the Two Spirits in Man'.¹ In this section man is apportioned as the lot of his inheritance either truth or evil, light or darkness. God has determined this apportionment. Man lives as he inherits either of these two spheres. If he is righteous, he lives in truth and light. If he is evil, he lives in darkness. The two spirits determine the action of a man so that if he has a greater portion in one or the other, he lives accordingly. According to a man's inheritance he is righteous or evil (4.24).

A similar idea can be found in the Apocrypha and Pseudepi-

¹ For one discussion of this section see J. Licht, 'An Analysis of the Treatise of the Two Spirits in the DSD', *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, 4 (1958), pp. 85-99.

grapha, but in these writings the thrust of the idea is directed toward the after-life. The eternal inheritance of the wicked is Sheol (2 Enoch 10.6, Ps. of Sol. 14.9, 15.11), while the pious inherit life (2 Enoch 9.1; Ps. of Sol. 14.4). The apocalyptic interest of those passages is not the primary interest of the Manual of Discipline passage. In that passage man inherits an evil or righteous state in this life, and on the basis of that inheritance is his eternal inheritance determined.

This is not to say that there is no eschatological interest in this passage or in the rest of the Scrolls. The lot of God's decision is assigned in an eschatological sense. A man's present lot, or inheritance, is an anticipation of his future inheritance.¹ The present determines the future and is an indication of what the future will bring.

The 'earthly' inheritance becomes the basis for associating with and membership in the Qumran community. An individual is accepted into the community according to his inheritance of understanding, his portion of righteousness (1 QH 14.19). For this reason the people of Israel are never referred to as the inheritance of God. The collective spirit is gone, and the 'inheritance' is given only to individuals. The emphasis is no longer on the Chosen People, but on the chosen individuals who go to make up the righteous remnant.

Finally, nowhere in the Scrolls is the Law referred to as the 'inheritance'. This seems strange, since the purpose of the community was to establish the true study and interpretation of the Law.² It can be explained, however, in light of what has been pointed out above. The inheritance of the individual was the presupposition upon which the true study of the Law was based. The men who possessed this inheritance were especially enlightened. They formed the righteous Remnant and represented the true Israel. The Law was removed as the inheritance of all Israel, and in its place true understanding of the Law was named as the inheritance.

This idea served to narrow down the heirs of the covenant and to provide a definite delineation of the 'righteous remnant'. The Law became effective only for those who truly understood it, and this understanding was the inheritance of the Sons of

¹ W. Brownlee, 'The Casting of Lots in Qumran and the Book of Acts', *Novum Testamentum*, 4 (1960), p. 247.

² T. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, New York (1956), p. 5.

Light who had removed themselves to the desert to make a renewal of the covenant with God. To these faithful few was given the inheritance of understanding. Therefore, inheritance could not be used in reference to the Law because the Law was theoretically available to everyone. Inheritance was made to apply to true understanding, the inalienable and special possession of the members of the Remnant.

This means that the concept of Inheritance had a twofold emphasis. It was the individual and present portion of a man which determined his behaviour and understanding on earth, and it was also the eschatological content of the Promise which could only be inherited by the New Covenant community (1 QH 6.8, 17.15; 4 QpPs 37, 3.10).

In summary, although certain features of the Old Testament concept of Inheritance were retained by the Dead Sea community, the majority of the inheritance terms appear in contexts which convey the special beliefs of the community. The Law holds a primary place in the community; however, a man's inheritance is not the Law but his righteousness and understanding of the Law. There is no tangible inheritance for the people of the New Covenant community. The content of their inheritance is eschatologised. They think of themselves as the Remnant, faithfully observing the Torah. They are the Sons of Light who after the last great battle with the Sons of Darkness will overthrow evil and inherit the Land. The concept of Inheritance for them is personal and present, which is the anticipation of the communal and future.

C. THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF INHERITANCE

Some of the elements of the Inheritance concept which have been so common in the Old Testament and the literature of late Judaism are completely missing in the New Testament concept of Inheritance. The designations of the Land, the People of Israel, Jerusalem, Zion or the Torah as 'inheritance' are not to be found.¹ A new element is added. Nowhere in the Old Testament or intertestamental literature is the Heir mentioned. In the New Testament possession of the inheritance depends on a relationship to the Heir. The Inheritance to

¹ For a discussion of the NT concept of the Land and land promises, see F. W. Marquardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-46.

which He gives access is the Kingdom of God. These are the two halves of the New Testament concept of Inheritance, Christ and the Kingdom, the Heir and the Inheritance. Within either half the other facets of the concept can be enclosed.

1. *The Centrality of Jesus Christ as the Heir*

The most significant fact that appears in the New Testament concept of Inheritance is the connexion between sonship and heirship, and specifically the appearance of the Son and Heir, Jesus. This connexion of sonship and heirship is not entirely new to the concept of inheritance, for as has been shown in the Old Testament section above direct physical descent normally determined who inherited. The Children of Israel inherited because they were descended from Abraham. Son and Heir are practically interchangeable terms in the Old Testament and rabbinic inheritance laws. However, nowhere in the Old Testament is one person designated as God's heir.¹ It is the New Testament that narrows down from the children of Israel or the Remnant to designate Jesus as the Heir.

This designation is based on Jesus' consciousness of being God's Son and Heir. This consciousness is recorded in the Parable of the Wicked Tenants, Mark 12.1-9 par.² In this parable Jesus identifies himself as God's Son and Heir. He says that the Owner, God, has sent his beloved Son, Himself, to the tenants of the vineyard, Israel, to collect the rent, the allegiance owed to God. The tenants, the leaders representing

¹ The idea is present, however. The fact that Israel was called God's son means that they must have considered themselves to be God's heir. The 'if-son-then-heir' idea was primary to OT inheritance laws.

² The authenticity of this parable has been disputed since A. Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, Tübingen (1910), p. 402. The basis of this rejection has been its allegorical form, the prediction of the death of Jesus, and the obvious elaboration of details. See, e.g., R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Oxford (1963), p. 177; F. Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel*, Göttingen (1963), p. 316; W. G. Kümmel, 'Das Gleichnis von den bösen Weingärtnern', *Aux Source de la Tradition*, Neuchâtel and Paris (1950), pp. 120-31. But others have pointed out that the story is not pure allegory, and that the mention of the murder of the son does not necessarily reflect the theology of the early Church, since neither the manner of death nor the resurrection is referred to at all, so V. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, London (1935), p. 103, *The Gospel according to Mark*, London (1957), p. 472; C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, London (1961), pp. 93-98; J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, London (1963), p. 77; A. T. Cadoux, *The Parables of Jesus*, London (n.d.), p. 41. Although some elaborations may have taken place, the story as a whole can be taken to be an authentic word of Jesus. See further O. Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament*, Philadelphia (1957), pp. 287ff.; B. M. F. van Iersel, 'Der Sohn' in den synoptischen Jesuswörtern, Leiden (1961). E. Lohmeyer, 'Das Gleichnis von den bösen Weingärtnern', ZST, 18 (1941), pp. 243-59.

all Israel, have recognised Him as the Heir and want to kill him. They want to take the Inheritance for themselves. The parable is a warning to the leaders and people of Israel that they cannot have the Inheritance without first accepting the Son and Heir.

Jesus comes and says that the way to the Inheritance lies through Him, not through observance of the Law. He is the fulfilment and end of the Law (Matt. 5.17; Rom. 10.4). Physical descent from Abraham counts for nothing. Israel has misunderstood. It is not God's Son; He is, and, therefore, He is God's true Heir. All that Israel has claimed as theirs is His. They can be co-heirs, but only if they accept Him. By receiving Him, they can share in the Inheritance. Jesus becomes, therefore, the foundation of the New Israel which will possess the Inheritance.

Jesus brings into the narrowest connexion the relationship to the Heir and entrance into the Inheritance. This can be demonstrated not only in this parable, but in almost every other place in the New Testament where the terms of the Inheritance concept appear. This connexion of Sonship and Heirship, grounded in the person and work of Jesus Christ, is the significant feature of the New Testament concept of Inheritance.

In the Gospels there are two general contexts, besides the above mentioned parable, in which the terms of Inheritance appear. One is the question which is put to Jesus by the rich man and others which runs, 'What thing must I do so that I will inherit eternal life?' (Mark 10.17; Matt. 19.29; Luke 18.18, 10.25). In each case Jesus first reminds the questioner of the commandments. As shown in the discussion above, in the teaching of late Judaism the inheritance of eternal life was dependent on the observance of the Law and the doing of good deeds. Jesus does not take away from that teaching, but adds a great deal to it. By telling the rich young man, for example, to sell all he has and follow Him, Jesus is saying that the observance of the Law and doing of good deeds are not enough to have the Inheritance. If a man is to inherit eternal life, he must leave everything, cast aside his old way of life, and follow Jesus.¹ He must establish a faith relationship to the Heir before he is able to share in the Inheritance.

¹ See the discussion in E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, Göttingen (1937), pp. 208-9.

A. Plummer has pointed out that there is a parallel here with the Abraham story. Just as Abraham was told to leave land, family, and security and set out on a journey to a place that he had never seen, so the rich man was told to cut away all ties of security and place his faith in Jesus.¹ The Inheritance promised to Abraham depended on his faith response to God's call. The one thing the questioners of Jesus had to do to inherit eternal life depended on a faith response to follow Him. Their inheritance depended on their relationship to the Heir.

The other context for the appearance of the Inheritance terms in the Gospels is best outlined in the Judgment Parable of Matt. 25.31-46. This parable teaches that the righteous inherit the Kingdom on the basis of how they have treated their brothers on earth. Moreover, their brothers are also the Lord's brothers, so a relationship to the Lord continues to be the basis of Inheritance. The ethical injunction to care for the stranger, the naked, the sick and the wretched grows out of this relationship; it is the result of being in Christ. If a man becomes co-heir of the Kingdom by faith in God's Son and Heir, he assumes the obligations of a son and heir.² A failure to fulfil the obligations of this relationship both to the Lord and to the brethren results in a man being disinherited. This same idea can be seen in Paul's teaching on ethics which will be studied below.

Variations of this same theme can be found in Inheritance contexts elsewhere in the New Testament. The general idea is the same: those who are in Christ shall inherit the Kingdom, but the obligations of sharing in the Inheritance include love and care for the poor, wretched neighbour. It must be emphasised that the New Testament does not teach that the Inheritance is won by good works, but that ethical concern is the result of being in Christ. Good works issue from a Christian's position as son and heir of God; they do not earn a man that position.³

Besides this ethical facet of Inheritance, the Epistles also contain the Gospel's teaching that the Inheritance is received because of a faith relationship to the Heir. Because Jesus Christ has come, man can be saved and can become an heir of eternal life (Col. 3.24; Eph. 1.18; Titus 3.7; Heb. 9.15). Jesus is the

¹ A. Plummer, *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, Edinburgh (1922), p. 422.

² For a general discussion of the sonship-obedience relation, see A. Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, London (1958), pp. 148-50.

³ T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, Cambridge (1935), p. 294, n. 4.

Son, and Heir of all things (Heb. 1.2).¹ He is the Mediator of a new covenant, and by His death He has redeemed man so that he is able to share in the eternal inheritance (Heb. 9.15).

Above all else the New Testament concept of Inheritance is Christocentric. Never in the New Testament is Christ called the Inheritance of the righteous, and only in the Parable of the Wicked Tenants and in Heb. 1.2, is He called the Heir, but the entire concept centres on Him as the God-given means by which men enter into the Inheritance.

2. *The Kingdom of God as Inheritance*

The concept of the Son of God as the Heir to whom all other men must relate themselves by faith results in the narrowing of the recipients of the Inheritance to One. But, that which men inherit through faith in Christ is broadened so that Canaan, the Land, is not the Inheritance of the righteous, at least not directly named so. The Inheritance of the man in Christ is the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom is not the sole reference of the verb *klēronomeîn*. There are many things that the Christian inherits. For example, he inherits eternal life (Mark 10.17, *et passim*), the promises (Heb. 6.12, 17), blessing (1 Pet. 3.9), salvation (Heb. 1.14) and the world (Rom. 4.13). The primary thing that he inherits, however, is the Kingdom (Matt. 25.34; 1 Cor. 6.9f, 15.50; Gal. 5.21; Eph. 5.5; Jas. 2.5). Indeed, things like eternal life, salvation and blessing are practically synonymous with or facets of the Kingdom. Therefore, the Kingdom can be described as the general Inheritance under which all other inheritances can be grouped.

The New Testament concept of Inheritance and the Kingdom continues and transforms the Old Testament ideas which have been discussed. If Canaan is not the inheritance of the righteous, the Kingdom and the new heaven and earth are (Rev. 21.1ff). While the physical descendants of Abraham are no longer the inheritance of God, the Church as the New Israel is; and God, as He is known and encountered in Christ and the Kingdom, is the inheritance of the children of God.

The inheritance of the Kingdom is pictured in the New

¹ For a discussion of sonship and heirship in this verse, see O. Michel, *Der Brief an der Hebräer*, Göttingen (1960), pp. 35-36. Also B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, London and New York (1889), p. 8.

Testament as already obtainable but not yet fully possessed. It is present possession when a man is in Christ, but it is also the eschatological 'Heilsgut' which will be possessed fully when Christ returns and God is all in all.

The 'already' of Inheritance can be described as membership in the Church, the Body of Christ. This membership is made up of fellow-heirs of Christ. Each member is in Christ and has the guarantee of the Inheritance through the witness of the Spirit. Membership in the Church can be described as a foretaste of the promised coming Inheritance. Because every member is in Christ, he is presently a son and an heir of the Kingdom, and he enjoys the privileges and obligations of that position within the framework of the Church.

The members of the Body of Christ are already partakers in the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ is the Heir who has brought the eternal Inheritance into the present. Present and future are combined in Him. A man in Christ is a son and heir now, and his heirship is guaranteed by his relation to Christ, the possession of the Spirit, and God's grace and election.¹

While the assurance of a share in the Inheritance and, to a certain extent, the Inheritance itself is a present reality, Inheritance in the New Testament can also be described as the future possession of the blessings of God, the eschatological 'Heilsgut'.

The New Testament continues the idea of late Judaism, which sharply differentiated between this world and the World to Come, and placed the inheritance of the righteous in the Coming Aeon. The various references of the verb *klēronomeō* from 'earth' to 'life' generally designate ultimate full possession of salvation.² The future emphasis of Inheritance can also be seen in the references to 'inheriting the promises' (Heb. 6.12, 17; cf. Gal. 3.18, 29). These promises are the same as those God made to the Israelites, namely that the children of God would enjoy peace and a full life, dwelling securely in a land given to them by God, with God as their Protector and Overseer. The Promise might be inherited now, but the fulfilment of the Promise is yet to be fully accomplished. The fulfilment must be awaited.³ The 'rest' in the city of God is the goal of

¹ P. Hammer, op. cit., p. 133. These ideas will be elaborated upon in the section over Paul's concept of Inheritance.

² A. Martin, 'Inheritance', HDB, vol. II, p. 472.

³ F. Baumgärtel, *Verheissung*, Gütersloh (1952), p. 12. See also E. Käsemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk*, Göttingen (1961), p. 30.

the people of God who must live in expectation of its coming.¹ This is the promised Inheritance.

Ultimately it is impossible to distinguish fully between and delineate the present and future aspects of the concept of Inheritance. The present possession is based on the past work of Christ, the present witness of the Spirit, and always looks forward to the future fulfilment. Inheritance is a fully eschatological concept in the New Testament. It is based on the fact that Jesus as the Heir brought the Inheritance into this world. He makes men heirs of the Kingdom. Their salvation on account of His work guarantees them entrance into the Kingdom now, for salvation is a present reality. However, salvation is also future, so that, like an heir, a man in Christ can only wait for the consummation of this age to enjoy full possession of the Inheritance in the world to come. The title 'heir' is a present privilege and gives assurance of the future full possession of the Inheritance.²

One further observation should be made. None of the 'inheritance' terms appear in the Johannine material. However, it would be incorrect to conclude from this that the Inheritance concept is entirely absent from John's thinking. On the contrary, it is possible to say that the title 'Heir of God' is implied every time John uses the title 'Son of God' for Jesus (too many references to list), and that the designation 'heirs of God' is implied each time John describes Christians as 'children of God' (John 1.12, 11.52; 1 John 3.1f, 10, 5.2). As for the Inheritance itself, while John, like Paul, rarely uses the phrase 'kingdom of God' (John 3.3, 5), its content is present. The Kingdom is characterised by the coming of Jesus, the gift of eternal life, and by the sending of the Spirit (e.g. John 3.16-36; 5.24; 6.47, 66-69; 11.27-28; 14.15, 25, *et passim*).³ Therefore, by implication both the heirs and the Inheritance are present in Johannine material, in spite of the absence of the inheritance terminology.

In summary, both Heilsgeschichte and eschatology are present in the concept of Inheritance throughout the New Testament, for it is the nature of Inheritance that it is and yet that it will be. Christ is the Heir and those in Christ are co-

¹ E. Käsemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 18.

² C. H. Pritchard, 'Heir', *HDCG*, vol. I, p. 712.

³ R. H. Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel*, London (1941), pp. 130-1.

heirs. The Inheritance is that which God had promised, that which He brought to fulfilment in the sending of His Son, and that which He will bring to completion in the Age to Come. It is the full possession of salvation and the 'rest' and peace of dwelling in God's holy city. It is the Kingdom of God.

D. THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF INHERITANCE: A SUMMARY

The biblical concept of Inheritance is based on God's Promise to Abraham that one day he would be a great nation dwelling in a good land. All that was required of Abraham was faith and obedience. The Promise was passed on to Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, so that when Joshua and the children of Israel entered into the Land of Canaan, they did so believing that it was their Inheritance. This was the Land which God had given to Abraham, their father.

Therefore, in the Old Testament the two halves of the Inheritance concept are generally the Elect People and the Promised Land. Both are the inheritance of God. He is the Giver of the Land to His people because of the promises He made to Abraham.

By the period of the literature of late Judaism, or the intertestamental literature, both Land and People are still part of the Inheritance, but because of the Exile and other factors the People were only a remnant and the possession of the Land was put off until the Eschaton. One further element was added. Strict observance of the Law, accompanied by the doing of good deeds, was the condition for inheriting the earth. Election and physical descent from Abraham were still important, but since the rabbis felt that the failure to observe the Law had been the reason for Israel's past misfortunes, strict observance of the Law should bring Israel into possession of the Land with all its blessings. If the Law could be perfectly observed, the World to Come would come.

In the New Testament the idea of the Land and People as the halves of the Inheritance concept is replaced by Christ and the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God with its new heaven and new earth is the Inheritance of the righteous. Canaan no longer plays the essential role in the New Testament that it did in the Old Testament and the intertestamental literature.

The idea of the People as the heirs of Yahweh is changed in

the New Testament. Jesus Christ is God's Son and Heir. He is the only Heir, and if men are to enjoy the Inheritance, they must be in Christ. Men are sons and heirs of God only when they accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

In the New Testament, therefore, the two halves of the Inheritance concept are Christ and the Kingdom, the Heir and the Inheritance.

The essence of the biblical concept of Inheritance is Heilsgeschichte, and Inheritance demonstrates Heilsgeschichte. Abraham sojourned in the Land which God gave him for an inheritance, but he never really possessed it. Joshua and the tribes of Israel dispossessed the inhabitants of their inheritance, but they never knew full possession of it. After the Exile all hope of earthly possession of the inheritance was gone. Then God sent His Son who brought the future into the present so that the man in Christ has guaranteed present possession of the Inheritance. However, he must wait for the full Inheritance with hope. In Christ the promised eternal Inheritance is already present but not yet fully possessed.

SECTION TWO

PAUL'S CONCEPT OF INHERITANCE

PAUL, along with the author of the book of Hebrews, uses the ideas of 'inheritance' more often than any other New Testament author. Aside from two occurrences in 1 Corinthians, one in Colossians and one in Ephesians, the majority of the appearances of the terminology of the concept are in Galatians, chapters three and four, and Romans, chapters four and eight. These, therefore, are the passages with which this section will be concerned. The discussion of Paul's contribution to the general biblical concept of Inheritance will show that he agrees with its general features and enriches it by his insights and illustrations.

The major figures of his Inheritance concept are Abraham, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God. The major terms are *heir*, *inheritance*, *inherit*, *joint-heir*, *seed*, *adoption*, *son* and *child*. Since it is obvious that a comprehensive discussion of these things would mean a major discussion of Pauline theology involving several volumes, the discussion within this section is limited to their use and meaning within Paul's concept of Inheritance.

The easiest, and perhaps the most comprehensive, way of getting at Paul's concept is to separate the discussion, as completely as possible, into a discussion of the heirs, of the inheritance, and finally of the inheritance and eschatology. The three chapters that follow, therefore, are: 'Who are the Heirs?', 'What do They Inherit?' and 'When do They Inherit?'

Two further comments: first, some of the arguments in the following chapters will depend on arguments and observations which are made in detail in the preceding section. This will be especially true in the areas of legal illustrations and, to some extent, intertestamental theology. If an unsupported statement is made in these areas, support for it should be found in the appropriate sections of the preceding chapters.

Secondly, this section is meant to be read as a whole. In the course of trying systematically to organise Paul's concept of Inheritance, a few somewhat unnatural divisions have had to be made. For example, the historical reality of Abraham will

be discussed without a full discussion of Inheritance and Heilsgeschichte, for that is the topic of Section Three of this paper. Therefore, if a point seems only partially made in one chapter, the other parts of the discussion should appear in a later chapter or chapters.

CHAPTER ONE

WHO ARE THE HEIRS?

WHEN the texts under discussion are approached with the question, 'who are the heirs?', two answers are encountered. The heirs of God are the 'seed', 'offspring' or 'descendants' of Abraham and they are the 'sons' or 'children' of God.

These answers are essentially related, but Paul separates them to some extent for the sake of his argument. Generally speaking, it may be said that his use of 'the seed of Abraham' is used in arguments against the Judaisers, while his use of 'the sons of God' occurs in passages written to reassure newly converted Christians of their new position in Christ. The common factor behind the use of both titles is the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

A. THE SEED OF ABRAHAM

Paul says that the heirs of God are the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3.16-29; cf. Rom. 4.13ff). Within this category he distinguishes between Christ who is the 'true' seed (Gal. 3.16) and those in Christ who are also the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3.29).

1. *Christ as the Seed*

Paul's argument in Gal. 3.16, is the central argument in his letters that Christ is the one true Seed of Abraham. The argument appears weak because it is based on an unusual grammatical argument which uses a singular meaning for a noun which is normally collective to stress the difference between Christ and the physical descendants of Abraham. Paul urges that the text of the Promise to Abraham does not say 'seeds' but 'seed'.¹

¹ Concerning Gal. 3.6-4.31, W. Koepf, 'Die Abraham-Midrashimkette des Galaterbriefes als das vorpaulinische heidenchristliche Urtheologumenon', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Uni. Rostok*, 2 (1952/53), pp. 181-7, points out that the last chapters of Galatians lack the style and unity of the first two, and he conjectures that Paul used an already existing anti-Jewish midrash argument which had been constructed by the Gentile Christians. The Midrashimkette is as follows: (1) 3.6-14, those of faith are the genuine sons of Abraham, (2) 3.15-18, the testament

There are several possible ways to explain Paul's argument in this verse. It must be admitted, however, that the argument is unusual or forced, for there can be little doubt that Paul was familiar with the collective use of the singular 'seed'. He was forcing the word to make it exclusively singular even though it could have been used, and indeed was used, to refer to an individual.¹ It must also be pointed out that Paul's argument is carried out in halachic fashion and that rabbinic parallels for this distinction of singular and plural uses of a word can be found.²

One further thing should be noted. The rabbis would understand Paul's use of the singular 'seed' to refer to one person, that one person, however, would be Isaac (BT Sanhedrin 59b, Nedarim 31a).³ Isaac was the one seed of Abraham through whom physical descent should be traced. Indeed, the patriarchs were often referred to as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to clearly denote the line of descent which was most important for the Israelites. The promise to Abraham that he would be a great nation was fulfilled, as far as the rabbis were concerned, by the birth of Isaac and his descendants.⁴

These rabbinic arguments provide a key to understanding Paul's strange argument in Gal. 3.16. First, he points out the obvious, the promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled by the appearance of *a* descendant. It could not be fulfilled by Ishmael, for God had chosen Sarah to be the mother of the promised nation. The Promise was to be fulfilled by Isaac. Therefore, it was apparent that not all the descendants of Abraham were to inherit (cf. Rom. 9.6-13). Paul argues that

promises of God are for the true seed of Abraham, (3) 3.19-25, slavery under the Law, (4) 4.1-10, the inheritance of the true sons of God, (5) 4.21-31, the hand-maid's son and the son who inherits. It is questionable whether one can accept all the points of Koepp's argument, but he has pointed out a possible solution to the reason why this section contains some unique arguments, especially the halachic argument concerning the 'seed' and the allegory of Hagar and Sarah. It is indeed likely that Paul had available to him an earlier anti-Jewish set of arguments with which he agreed and which he could use effectively against the Judaizers in Galatia.

¹ D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, London (1956), p. 444.

² E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, London (1957), p. 70. See footnote 4 for examples given by the author.

³ H. Freedman and M. Simon, *Midrash Rabba: Genesis*, pp. 464, 466, 471.

⁴ D. Daube, *New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, pp. 441-4, points out that Paul's use of the generic singular has rabbinic background. The rabbis laid stress on the oneness of God, the oneness of Adam who was father of all, and the oneness of mankind. 'As the rabbis laid stress on the oneness of Adam, father of all, so Paul lays stress on the oneness of Jesus, who, on the strength of the old promise, gathers up in himself all the redeemed' (p. 442).

election is not based on physical descent. Isaac and Jacob were chosen; Ishmael and Esau were rejected; yet all were the 'seed' of Abraham. Therefore, it was possible for Paul to say that the 'seeds' of Abraham, all his descendants, did not inherit, only the 'seed', the one who fulfils the Promise.

Then Paul argues that Isaac was not the seed of the Promise. The true Seed, the true 'Isaac', is the Christ. That is to say, the Messiah is the One who fulfils in His person the Promise that Abraham would be a great nation and be a blessing to all nations. Because the Messiah is the fulfilment and brings the fulfilment of God's Promise to Abraham, He is the one true Seed of Abraham.

It was obvious to Paul and his readers that Isaac did not bring the fulfilment of the Promise. In fact the fulfilment of the Promise had been placed in the World to Come by the authors of late Judaism. It was Paul's message that the Seed of Abraham had come because the Messiah, who fulfilled the Promise to Abraham, had come. The true Seed is the Messiah, since only He can fulfil the Promise.¹

Therefore, Paul deliberately stresses the oneness of the Seed, Jesus Christ. He does this for two reasons. First, he reminds the Jews of their physical stress on God's spiritual election. He implicitly points out that while they considered Isaac to be the seed of Abraham, there were in reality other seed. If physical descent were so important for election, the sons of Ishmael and Esau were also heirs of God, and the Jews did not believe that they were. Paul tries to show that the indiscriminate use of the title 'seed of Abraham' for the physical descendants of Abraham could not be valid by their own belief. There was only *one* seed that mattered.

Secondly, by stressing the singular, Paul teaches that Jesus Christ is the one true Seed of Abraham. In Him the great nation of the Promise is embodied, and men are members of that nation only if they join themselves by faith to Him.²

The ideas of the one Seed and the Body of Christ—which is another way of designating the People and Nation of God—are integrally related in Paul's thought.³ The wider concept

¹ Cf. A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, London (1953), pp. 210-11.

² C. K. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last*, London (1962), p. 77. J. B. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, London (1892), pp. 142-3. E. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

³ P. Hammer, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

behind both of these ideas is 'corporate solidarity'.¹ The many are found in the One, and the One represents the many. The many have no claim to the Kingdom, to the Inheritance, outside of the One. If physical Israel was to be determined by physical descent from Isaac and Jacob, spiritual Israel is determined by those in Christ. The focal point of God's Promise, its midpoint and fulfilment, is the one true Seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ. For Paul salvation centres in the One to whom men must come if they are to be descendants of Abraham. He reverses the Jewish idea of the seed which stresses the plural and says that there is only One Seed. It is He who is all-important for salvation and the fulfilment of the Promise.²

There could be another reason for Paul's stress of the singular 'seed'. This one carries through the illustration from law in verse 15. A. Halmel has pointed out that there is a parallel to Roman legal thought in this verse. He says that Paul is arguing that Christ is the *persona certa* of the testament mentioned in verse 15.³ That is to say, Paul stresses the singular to show that God's covenant with Abraham pointed to a specific person. By Roman law any testament that failed to mention a definite person as heir was invalid. Paul is arguing that to take 'seed' in the plural is to leave in doubt who the heir is, thus invalidating the institution of heirship set up in the Abrahamic covenant.

Whether Halmel's argument can be accepted or not is open to question. His argument does, however, suggest a broader legal interpretation which might be more plausible. Since Paul argued that Christ is the only true descendant of Abraham, it follows that Paul believed Christ to be the only true Heir to the Promise. The covenant promises of God to Abraham had

¹ R. P. Shedd, *Man in Community*, London (1958), pp. 136-8. Under a section entitled 'Jesus Christ is the True Isaac' Shedd points out that the seed of Abraham 'is not merely an individual, but is a corporate figure, including in himself all the true sons of Abraham, even as Isaac had incorporated ethnic Israel in himself. . . . Christ is here viewed as a corporate personality who includes in himself all the true sons of Abraham thus annulling the age-old cleavage between Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female. . . . The true Israel is formed by incorporation into a person (i.e. the Body of Christ), not a community or society. This Person in turn creates a community of fellowship in Himself' (p. 137). Compare C. A. A. Scott, *Christianity according to St. Paul*, Cambridge (1961), p. 155. He maintains that 'Christ' in Gal. 3.16 is strictly a corporate figure.

² Cf. O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, Philadelphia (1949), p. 116; *The Early Church*, London (1956), p. 129. J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body*, London (1952), pp. 60-61.

³ A. Halmel, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

to pass on to Christ because He was the true Seed. In general this legal concept would be true in any system of law with which Paul was familiar. A man's only male issue was usually his only heir. Paul is using a valid legal concept to illustrate the spiritual truth that the Messiah is the Heir of the Promise because He is the one true Seed of Abraham.¹

Although Paul never calls Jesus the Heir, he assigns to Him all the characteristics of heirship, including calling Him God's Son. For Paul Jesus is Heir in everything but title. The failure to use that title does not eliminate the fact that for Paul Jesus was the Heir, the Seed of Abraham, and the Son of God.²

2. *Christians as the Seed*

The other half of Paul's seed metaphor is his assertion that Christians are the 'seed of Abraham' (Gal. 3.29).³ This half of the metaphor is very much dependent of the first half. Christians are the seed of Abraham because they are 'one in Christ' (Gal. 3.28b) who is the true Seed of Abraham. All those who are in Christ are the seed of Abraham whether they be Jew or Gentile.⁴ For Paul, as well as for the rest of the New Testament, the concept of Inheritance is Christocentric. Christ is the true Seed from whom the rest of the spiritual descendants of the Promise spring. Paul's second half of the seed metaphor goes from the One to the many, but the diversity of the seed is always built upon the presupposition of the unity which the seed have in the Seed.⁵

It was commonly assumed in late Judaism that the phrase

¹ With regard to this passage, an interesting legal argument has been outlined by G. M. Taylor, 'The Function of *pistis Christou* in Galatians', JBL, 85 (1966), pp. 58-76. In this article he argues that Roman law would be the natural legal system for Paul to use in his illustrations, especially to the Galatians (p. 70), thus reaching the same conclusions as this study. However, he takes the *diathēkē* of Gal. 3.15-18 to refer to a testament, and *pistis Christou* to refer to the Roman legal device of *fidei commissum*. (The argument is too detailed to be outlined adequately here.) While the author is probably correct in saying that *pistis Christou* is the reliability of Christ in dispensing the benefits of the inheritance, I believe that (a) the idea of the 'covenant', especially the Abrahamic covenant, has to be allowed for in the passage, and (b) the more simple legal argument outlined above has better support from the context.

² See H. Findeisen, 'Zu Galater 3, 15-29', NKS, 9 (1898), p. 249. A fuller discussion of Paul's concept of Jesus as Heir will be given below.

³ S. Schulz and G. Quell, TWBNT, VII, p. 545, point out that statistically Paul uses 'seed' most often to refer to 'Abrahamsnachkommenschaft', e.g. Romans 4.13, 16, 18; 9.7; 11.1; 2 Cor. 11.22; Gal. 3.29.

⁴ H. Weinel, *St Paul*, London (1906), pp. 294ff. T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, Cambridge (1935), pp. 137-8.

⁵ J. A. T. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

'seed of Abraham' referred not only to Isaac but also to all the physical descendants of Abraham. The Jews' superiority over the Gentiles consisted in the fact that they believed themselves to be direct lineal descendants of the Patriarchs. This direct lineal descent was very important, for it guaranteed the benefits of God's election and love and was the assurance of final salvation. For the Jews the phrase 'seed of Abraham' was not a metaphor but a biological fact.¹

Paul denies the rabbinic or Jewish interpretation of the 'seed of Abraham' as dependent on pure physical descent. He argues against this in several ways. He favours the singular interpretation of the word 'seed'; it refers to the One descendant of Abraham. He argues further that the One descendant was the descendant of the Promise and that that one descendant was not Isaac. Although Isaac was Abraham's son after the flesh, he does not fulfil the Promise God made to Abraham. The fulfilment came in Christ; therefore, He is the Seed. The seed of Abraham are not the physical descendants of Abraham but the descendants by the Promise. These descendants can only be those who are in Christ. The key words for the descendants are not 'lineage' and 'Law', but 'faith' and 'Promise'. Those who have faith are the seed of Abraham and inherit his Promise.

Paul says that Abraham is the father of all those who believe (Rom. 4.11b, 16-17). In order to understand this and other similar statements concerning the fatherhood of Abraham and its meaning for the Christians, it is necessary to turn aside temporarily from the seed metaphor and outline Paul's teaching about Abraham.²

When one reads Gal. 3 and Rom. 4, the figure of Abraham emerges serving two purposes: (1) he is used as a symbol of faith; and (2) he is used as the historical beginning point of justification and election history; he is the first receiver of the Promise. That is to say, Abraham is the father of Israel, both

¹ J. Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, London (1958), p. 48. For a fuller discussion of the importance of physical descent for the Jews, see J. Jocz, *A Theology of Election*, London (1958), pp. 63ff. Jocz says that proselytism seemed to weaken the straightforward biological view of the rabbis, so that some tried to solve the problem by insisting that the souls of the proselytes were present at Sinai. This does not solve the problem at all, says Jocz, because it introduces a spiritual factor into a physical relationship. Nevertheless, blood ties were always important to the pious Jew (pp. 63-64).

² The passages of Paul's letters which bear directly on the seed metaphor and on the concept of Inheritance are also the main passages dealing with Abraham. Therefore, only Rom. 4 and Gal. 3 will be considered in the following paragraphs.

'old' and 'new', because he was elected by God, chosen to become the father of the people of God, and had faith to believe God's Promise. For Paul Abraham plays an essential role in faith and history.

It has been argued by Günter Klein¹ that Abraham played no historical role in Paul's thought (p. 431). He maintains that Paul understands Abraham only as a timeless example (p. 435). If Paul does use Abraham as a historical figure, it is only to do away with the difference between Jew and Gentile, thereby destroying Israel's special place in history. Paul '... entheiligt und paganisiert die Geschichte Israels' (p. 441).²

The major weakness of Klein's position is his existential view of history. His entire argument is based on the contention that Paul was interested in Abraham only because of his act of faith. Paul calls Abraham 'father' only in and through faith (pp. 435-6).

Klein commits the obvious error of removing the foundation of Abraham's importance, or, in other words, because Klein is not interested in the historical Abraham, Paul cannot be. It is impossible to believe this of Paul, however. As a Jew Paul had undoubtedly been impressed with the importance of Abraham as the historical founder of Israel. It was to Abraham that the Promise had first been given. He was the founder of Israel, the historical figure who marks the beginning of Israel's election.³

If 'faith' plays an important part in Paul's teaching about Abraham, it must be remembered that there was a polemical reason for emphasising it. Paul was arguing with the Jewish teaching that Abraham was justified by works and that the physical descendants of Abraham who observe the Torah will also be justified. For the Jews of Paul's time, both in Palestine and the Diaspora, Abraham was the greatest of the Patriarchs and a great figure of faith.⁴ He was the most faithful of God's

¹ G. Klein, 'Römer 4 und die Idee der Heilsgeschichte', ET 23 (1963), pp. 424-47.

² In the above-mentioned article Klein included an argument against Ulrich Wilckens, 'Die Rechtfertigung Abrahams nach Römer 4', *Studien zur Theologie der alttestamentlichen Überlieferung*, hrsg. von R. Rendtorff und K. Koch, Neukirchen (1961), pp. 111-28. Wilckens answered Klein's arguments in an article entitled 'Zur Römer 3, 21-4, 25: Antwort an G. Klein', ET 24 (1964), pp. 586-610. In the discussion which follows I will use some of Wilckens' arguments as well as my own to point out the weaknesses of Klein's position.

³ U. Wilckens, 'Die Rechtfertigung', p. 122.

⁴ H. J. Schoeps, *Paul*, London (1961), p. 204.

servants (BT Baba Bathra 15b). He was the first of the proselytes (BT Hagigah 3a), and father of the whole world (BT Berakoth 13a). He was given a foretaste of the World to Come, and the angel of Death had no hold over him (BT Baba Bathra 17a). However, these honours came to Abraham because he observed the Torah before it was given (BT Kiddushin 82a, Yoma 28b, Sotah 14a) and was perfect on account of circumcision (BT Nedarim 31b, 32a).¹

Paul fought against this rabbinic teaching of justification by works using justification by faith as his weapon. His insistence on the priority of faith has polemical as well as spiritual overtones. He taught that Abraham's faith came before circumcision, therefore, Abraham was reckoned as righteous on account of his faith, not on account of a work of the Law. Indeed, 430 years elapsed between the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenants, so that the covenant of faith had even chronological precedence over the Law. The Inheritance promised to Abraham came to him by faith; circumcision was only a sign and seal of his earlier faith response.

The failure of Klein's argument is the failure to give full weight to the polemical purpose of Paul's teaching. Paul's emphasis on faith is a counter-balance to a rabbinic emphasis on works. This faith emphasis does not automatically eliminate an interest on Paul's part for the historical figure of Abraham; on the contrary, it presupposes it.

When Paul calls Abraham 'our forefather according to the flesh' (Rom. 4.1), and 'the father of all those who believe' (Rom. 4.11), he connects the historical with the symbolical Abraham. He starts his argument with the presupposition of the historical Abraham. He does not seek to argue his historicity; he simply calls him 'our forefather'. Then he proceeds to argue the importance of Abraham for the Jews and Gentiles. Abraham believed God (Rom. 4.3, 20, 21) and became heir of the world, father of many nations (Rom. 4.13, 18). In other words, Abraham is the first heir of the Promise and an example to all other heirs. His faith, based on God's Promise, issued in God's declaration of righteousness and Abraham's obtaining the guarantee of the Promise, a son from Sarah. Abraham's faith was founded on grace and election and issued in righteousness and having the Inheritance.

¹ For more texts on Abraham, see Bill., vol. III, pp. 186-202, 203.

Therefore, Paul's point in both Galatians 3 and Romans 4 is to point out to the faithful that they share in the election of Abraham and become by grace of his descendants. Faith is the means by which this sharing is possible, but faith is not the end in itself. Abraham's historic decision of faith was based on the historical reality of the Promise and the Inheritance. Paul does not think of faith as an individual, general possibility, but as possible only within the arena of God's historical acts.¹

Without this historical background, the Promise of God for an Inheritance, Abraham's faith has no real meaning. While there can be little doubt that Abraham was a symbol of faith for Paul, he was also the first heir of the Promise and the historical founder of God's people. Without this twofold emphasis, Paul's use of Abraham would be meaningless, for the Christian would not know what initiated Abraham's faith or what it resulted in. If Abraham is just a symbol of faith for Paul, the entire history of Israel, the history of the descendants of Abraham and God's dealing with them in renewing the Promise, would have no meaning for the Church. The Old Testament could not convey anything essential about God's acts of salvation. Faith might be the key to justification, but the historical Abraham is the key to understanding what justification means and brings. For Paul justification means sharing in the Promise given to Abraham and fulfilled in Christ.

There can be no doubt that Paul's view of Abraham changed after his conversion, and there can also be no doubt that he considered God's act of salvation and justification to have begun in the justification by faith of Abraham. Paul presupposes the justification of Abraham in the Christian message of justification. He believes that the same divine justification was at work in Abraham as is now at work in Christ. One was the beginning, the other the fulfilment.²

¹ U. Wilckens, 'Die Rechtfertigung', p. 123.

² U. Wilckens, 'Zu Römer 3, 21-4, 25', p. 604. Wilckens' statement is worth quoting in full. 'Vom Gesichtspunkt unsere historischen Betrachtungsweise aus gesehen, hat man natürlich festzustellen, dass diese ganze Abrahamsbild eine christliche Neuschöpfung aus der jüdischen Abrahamslieferung ist. Aber unter dem Aspekt des Selbstverständnisses paulinischer Theologie darf man das gerade nicht sagen; denn es kommt Paulus sehr darauf an, dass in der Tat der Erzvater Abraham selbst bereits im Damals des Schriftzeugnisses der Genesis die Rechtfertigung aus Glauben ebenso erfahren habe wie die Christen seiner Gegenwart, und dass somit das göttliche Handeln im Christusgeschehen seiner Anfangsgeschichte in dieser Rechtfertigung Abrahams und der Verheissung an ihn gehabt habe. Der Christliche Glaube, so meintes Paulus, hat an Abraham nichts christianisiert, sondern umgekehrt: die christliche Rechtfertigungsbotschaft tritt ganz neben

One further point must be made. There is no essential difference in Paul's argument in Gal. 3 and Rom. 4. In both places it is Paul's contention that the Christian is a descendant of Abraham (Gal. 3.29; Rom. 4.16-17) and that Abraham is a symbol of faith, a type of one justified by faith (Gal. 3.6, 9; Rom. 4.11-12, 17-22). It may be said that one aspect is emphasised over another in the two passages, but they are essentially related.¹

For Paul, then, Abraham is a symbol of faith because he is the type of one justified by faith, but he is also the historical figure who marks the beginning of election history. The historical Abraham cannot be eliminated from the symbolical Abraham and still have Paul's argument meaningful. For Paul the line of redemption runs from Abraham to Christ to the Church.² To argue as Klein does brings one dangerously close to Marcionism.

Now to return to Paul's concept of the Christians as the seed of Abraham. It is Paul's contention that the descendants of Abraham are those who have faith like his. Because of faith the seed include both Jew and Gentile; racial and religious differences do not exist among the seed of Abraham because they are one in Christ. Paul claims that the universalism of the Abrahamic Promise—he was to be father of many nations (Gen. 12.3, 17.5)—is the same universalism that exists 'in Christ'.³ It is obvious, therefore, that Paul conceived of the 'seed of Abraham' not physically but spiritually. Faith, promise, election: these things designated the 'seed'.⁴ Physical descent was no longer important for Paul. If the Jews, who boasted of physical descent, became true seed of Abraham by faith, it was only to be expected; they had had all of the advantages (Rom. 9.4-5). However, they could not depend on physical descent for salvation, for only those in Christ were the true seed, heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3.29).⁵

das Schriftzeugnis von der Rechtfertigung Abrahams, weil die Offenbarung der Gottesgerechtigkeit im Christusgeschehen die Wirkung desselben Gottesgerechtigkeit an Abraham heilsgeschichtlich voraussetzt, ihre "Offenbarung" also ihre endzeitliche Verwirklichung ist. Denn der Gott, den Paulus als den im Christusgeschehen Handelnden proklamiert, ist Jahwe, der Gott Abrahams.'

¹ Against H. Koester, 'Die Auslegung der Abrahamsverheissung in Hebräer 6', *Studien der alttestamentliche Ueberlieferung*, pp. 95-96.

² O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, pp. 110, 118. *Heil als Geschichte*, Tübingen (1965), pp. 241ff.

³ C. K. Barrett, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-79.

⁴ E. Lohmeyer, *Grundlagen Paulinischer Theologie*, Tübingen (1929), pp. 34, 159.

⁵ A. Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 218. H. J. Schoeps, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-2.

Paul's major contention is that the Abrahamic covenant is a covenant of faith. Abraham's position as father of many nations and heir of the world depended on his faith. Therefore, those who have faith like his participate in the Abrahamic covenant and become by their participation the 'seed of Abraham'. In this way the Christian community enjoyed direct descent from Abraham.¹ Because of a common faith which issued in justification, Abraham can be legitimately called 'our forefather according to the flesh' (Rom. 4.1), or, in other words, 'our historical forefather'. He precedes the faithful, Jews and Gentiles, both in faith and history.

In summary, Paul's metaphor of the seed can be divided into two parts. First, he claims that by virtue of God's saving work in Christ Jesus, fulfilling the Promise He made to Abraham, Christ is the true Seed of Abraham. Secondly, by a man's faith he becomes one with Christ and therefore a seed of Abraham. The Seed of Abraham is Christ, and the seed of Abraham are those in Christ. The metaphor does not depend on blood ties and works as it does in Judaism, but on faith in Christ and partaking in the Promise. The seed of Abraham are those who follow his historical example of faith and are justified, thereby becoming heirs according to the Promise.²

B. THE SONS AND CHILDREN OF GOD

While Paul talks of the Christians as being the 'seed of Abraham', his more common designation of them is 'sons' or 'children' of God. With this description he is not so concerned to combat the teachings of Judaism as he is to assure those in Christ of the security and hope of their position in Him. Christians are sons and heirs of God.

1. Paul's Use of the Adoption Metaphor

Paul uses 'adoption' (*huiiothesia*) in his letters to the Galatians

¹ E. Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 124, 130.

² Three Roman Catholic articles should be mentioned here: L. Di Fonzo, 'De Semine Abrahæ, promissionum herede, iuxta S. Paulum in Gal. 3', *Verbum Domini*, 21 (1941), pp. 49-58; two by J. M. Bover, 'In Christo Jesu, filii Dei omnes unus, semen Abrahæ (Gal. 3.26-29)', *Verbum Domini*, 4 (1924), pp. 14-21; 'Et semini tuo, qui est Christus (Gal. 3.16)', *Verbum Domini*, 3 (1923), pp. 365-6. The last two articles very heavily stress the role of the Church, so that the reader is left with the impression that the Head is nothing without the Body, or that the sons of Abraham are as necessary as the Seed of Abraham.

and Romans to help explain how men become sons of God. His use of it presupposes the legal practice of adoption in the society of his day. Adoption was evidently a common practice in the ancient world. Both the Greeks and the Romans used it to ensure the continuation of the family unit and possession of family property. It was also used to allow the testator to give his property to the person of his choice if he had no heirs. It was an expedient to avoid intestate succession.

There can be no doubt that *huiiothesia* is a technical legal term in Hellenistic law,¹ however, it does not follow that Paul had Hellenistic adoption laws in mind when he used the word. Although adoption was a common practice in Greece, and the adoption testament was the most common type of testament found before the fourth century B.C., there is no trace of the adoption testament in the papyri. Adoption was probably practised in Hellenistic society, but it did not play the important role that it had in Greek law. A man did not have to adopt a son in order to have an heir. In Hellenistic times a simple distribution of gifts, perhaps even a death-bed distribution, took the place of adoption. The naming of an heir was not important, therefore adoption was reduced in importance.²

It is virtually impossible to trace the adoption metaphor to Jewish law. Adoption was unknown in the Old Testament, and the levirate marriage had been instituted to provide a man, even though deceased, with heirs in order that his property would not pass out of the possession of his family. Furthermore, a thoroughgoing system of intestate succession was begun in

¹ A. Deissmann, *Paulus*, Tübingen (1911), pp. 102-3.

² O. Eger, 'Rechtswörter und Rechtsbilder in den paulinischen Briefen', ZNW, 18 (1917/18), pp. 84-108, argues that Paul used Hellenistic law because he used legal terms from the papyri. His argument seems weak for two reasons. First, it assumes that all Hellenistic law must be the same as that found in the Graeco-Egyptian papyri. However, it is generally agreed that Hellenistic law varied from province to province in the particulars. See, e.g., F. Sieffert, *Das Recht im NT*, Göttingen (1900), p. 16. Secondly, he assumes that because Paul used the terms of Hellenistic law he was dependent on the thought behind the terms. It is far more likely that because Paul was a Roman citizen and a Jew, his legal ideas would come from those systems of law. He used the Greek language to express himself, but not necessarily the Hellenistic legal ideas behind it. W. M. Calder, 'Adoption and Inheritance in Galatia', JTS, 31 (1930), pp. 372-4, urges that Paul was indebted to the adoption laws of South Galatia for his illustration in Gal. 4.4ff. His argument is weak because it assumes a detailed knowledge of local law on Paul's part, a knowledge of what Calder designates the Graeco-Seleucid law of South Galatia. This law permitted the adoption of step-sons and sons-in-law. Calder's argument seems strained when one realises that the importance of Paul's adoption metaphor is to point out that a man who previously was an outsider is brought into God's family.

the Old Testament and elaborated upon by the rabbis so that there was always an heir. Adoption was not necessary in Jewish society.¹

Because adoption played such an important role in Roman law and society, and because Roman law played an important role in Paul's life and ministry, it is most likely that the general legal idea behind *huiiothesia* is Roman.²

Before examining the adoption passages more closely, it must be urged that in both Gal. 4.5 and Rom. 8.15 *huiiothesia* should be translated 'adoption'. 'Sonship', the other possible translation, does not convey the total idea behind the word. In Paul's teaching the Christian's sonship is dependent on his adoption. Only Jesus is God's Son by natural right. Every other man is His son by adoption. Therefore, 'adoption' is the idea which best fits in each context.

In the context in which Paul's adoption metaphor appears, there are certain expressions which point to the fact that *huiiothesia* is to be translated as 'adoption', and that Paul is dependent upon Roman law for his allusion. These expressions or phrases have to do with the receiving of the adoption through the redeeming work of Christ and the witness of the Spirit so that the adopted one is no longer a slave but a son. The most outstanding feature of the metaphor is Paul's teaching that by the redeeming work of Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit, men are bought from the power of the *stoicheia tou kosmou* and become sons and heirs of God.

Examined in the light of Roman style adoption, the redemption of man from the *stoicheia tou kosmou* which Paul teaches in Galatians 4.3-7, may imply something different from the standard allusion of his verb *eksagorazō* (verse 5), 'to purchase out of the slave market'. Paul could be alluding to the ceremony of adrogation (adoption) where a man is bought out from under the *patria potestas* of one man and placed under the *patria potestas* of another. It remains, therefore, to examine the

¹ S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, Oxford (1959), pp. 37, 78, argues that adoption was present in the idea of sacral kingship in Israel and Mesopotamia. He points to the formula in Psalms 2.7, 'You are my son: Today have I begotten you', as an adoption formula. The king was God's son by adoption. Be that as it may, it is still true that there is no legislation for, nor clear example of, adoption in the Old Testament or rabbinic materials. See M. W. Schoenberg, 'Huiiothesia: the Word and the Institution', *Scripture*, 15 (1963), pp. 115-23, for further support of this conclusion.

² See further Th. Mommsen, *Die Rechtsverhältnis des Apostel Paulus*, ZNW, 2 (1901), pp. 81-96. F. Sieffert, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

ideas of the *stoicheia*, *potestas*, and adrogation to see if the allusion to Roman adoption can be present in Galatians 4.¹

For Paul the *stoicheia tou kosmou* were more than the material elements of which the world is composed, more than the four basic elements described by the Greek philosophers. They are the personal elements of this world which have power over a man and cause him to sin against God. In his dissertation W. A. Cramer defines them as the powers which operate in a man in his disobedience, ignorance and apostasy; they are the religio-moral habits of the man of flesh.² Paul believes that all men are under the power of the *stoicheia*, and he tells the Galatians that they are demonstrating their slavery by their willingness to return to the observance of the Law, special days, and special seasons (Gal. 4.8-10).³

It is possible that Paul conceived of the 'elemental spirits of the world' as the *pater familias* of this world because of the power they had over it. In Roman society the *pater familias* had virtually unlimited power over his household and everyone in it. Even a son was in practically the same position as a slave as long as he was under the *potestas* of his father. Paul makes use of this fact in Gal. 4.3-7. The *stoicheia* held unlimited power in this world over the 'old man' of the flesh; he was in slavery under the *potestas* of the 'elemental spirits'. However, Paul goes on to say that through the love of God, the redemption through Christ, and the witness of the Holy Spirit, man can be adopted, bought out from the power of the elemental spirits and placed

¹ Another legal allusion is suggested by W. Elert, 'Redemptio ab hostibus', TLZ, 71 (1947), col. 265-70. He suggests that *eksagorazo* should not be translated with the idea of buying out of slavery, since Paul continues to speak of slavery to God as a part of the Christian's life. He sees the allusion as 'redemptio ab hostibus', the purchase of a prisoner of war with the result that the redeemed comes under the *potestas* of the buyer. This *redemptio* fits the context of Gal. 4 because it alludes to purchase out of the hand of enemies and to the buyer as redeemer of all races, nationalities, and classes of people. The one weakness I see in the allusion is that under this system the buyer was to be paid back by the redeemed; the buyer held a lien against the redeemed which had to be paid back. The redeemed could earn his freedom. This tends to weaken Paul's general argument for God's free grace and electing love and for man's inability to 'save' himself. However, on the whole, the argument presented by Elert is very interesting.

² W. A. Cramer, *Stoicheia tou Kosmou*, Leiden (1961), pp. 175-6. See also W. P. H. Hatch, 'Ta stoicheia in Paul and Baraisan', JTS, 28 (1927), pp. 181ff. Hatch says that Paul's belief about the *stoicheia* has a parallel in the 'Book of the Laws of the Country' where it also means 'personal powers or elementary spirits'.

³ For a complete discussion of Paul's connexion of the Law with the *stoicheia*, which need not be repeated here, see B. Reicke, 'The Law and This World according to Paul', JBL, 70 (1951), pp. 259-76.

under the *potestas* of God, whom they now call, 'Abba, Father!' (Gal. 4.6, Rom. 8.15).

All the elements present in the Roman form of adoption ceremony are present in Paul's adoption metaphor: the adopter, the purchase price and the witness.

Paul's adopter is God.¹ He provides the purchase price by sending His Son. He also provides the witness by sending the Spirit. He 'buys' man out from the power of the elemental spirits and brings them under His power. Man no longer lives in the 'flesh' but walks by and lives in the Spirit. This new life under God not only means that men can become sons and heirs of God, but also that as sons they have obligations to fulfil in order to have the Inheritance. More will be said of this below.

Paul's purchase price is Jesus Christ. He is the Redeemer, whether the allusion in this chapter refers to a slave market or adrogation. In the fulness of time God sent His Son so that men might become sons (Gal. 4.4).

Paul's witness is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit might even be called the *familiae emptor*. It is His duty to guarantee both the sonship and the Inheritance until the heirs can take full possession of them. In any case, He is sent by the Father to assure men of the new position of sonship which they have in Christ. He witnesses to the Christian, or with his spirit, that he is a son of God (Gal. 4.6; Rom. 8.16).²

It must be pointed out, however, that adoption for Paul is not a legal transaction, nor does it take place through the Law. The effective cause of adoption is Christ.³ If the idea of a legal transaction is present in Galatians 4, it is present only in the form of an illustration.⁴ The Roman form of adoption can illustrate God's saving act in Christ in that before Christ man was a slave, under the power of the elemental spirits of this

¹ Cf. W. Twisselmann, *Die Gotteskindschaft der Christen nach dem Neuen Testament*, Gütersloh (1939), pp. 62-64.

² In an article entitled 'A Suggestion with regard to Romans 8.23', *Interpretation*, 11 (1957), pp. 455-60, C. C. Oke argues that *aparchē* is a technical legal term for the birth certificate of a free person. The activity of the Spirit in the context of verses 16-23 makes the sense of the passage, 'the certification of the Spirit'. This interpretation accords quite well with the argument offered here.

³ L. Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l'Eglise suivant St. Paul*, Paris (1948), p. 63. W. Twisselmann, op. cit., pp. 93, 99.

⁴ As W. Twisselmann, op. cit., pp. 65-66, points out, adoption is never a purely legal transaction in Paul's thought. It presupposes the theological idea of the adoptive sonship of Israel and the work of the Holy Spirit. See also D. J. Theron, 'Adoption in the Pauline Corpus', *EQ*, 28 (1956), pp. 6-14; and M. W. Schoenberg, 'The Adoptive Sonship of the Israelites', *AER*, 143 (1960), pp. 261-73.

world; after Christ, the man of faith is aware by the witness of the Spirit that his existence is no longer that of a slave; he is now a son and heir of God.¹

2. *Christ as the Heir*

As has been pointed out before, Paul's concept of Inheritance is Christocentric. This assertion can be made in spite of the fact that Paul never uses *klēronomos* to refer to Christ. The closest he comes to it is to use *synklēronomos* for the Christian, implying that Christ is the Heir and Christians co-heirs. To fully explain why Paul did not use the title 'Heir' for Christ is impossible. However, several reasons suggest themselves and will be briefly outlined.

The implication of the office of 'heir' and the scriptural precedent for its use make it a title which is better suited for the Christian than for Christ. An heir has been defined as a person who comes into a privileged position as a result of a filial relationship to a testator. No personal exertion on his part is necessary for entrance into that position. It is a grace gift. Furthermore, the Old Testament, while never applying the title 'heir' to Israel, consistently maintains that the whole people of God will one day enter into the Inheritance. It is the Elect of God who are the Heirs.

Of course these characteristics of the office of heir, both legal and scriptural, can be applied to Christ. However, besides his use of 'Seed' to apply to Christ, Paul uses two other titles which replace 'Heir' as a 'messianic' title. Paul prefers to call Jesus the Son of God or the Servant.

Instead of the title Heir, Paul's concept of Inheritance centres on the title Son as a designation for Jesus. This can be seen clearly in Gal. 3.26-4.7 and Rom. 8.14-17. In both places the means of the Christian's adoption and subsequent sonship is God's sending of His Son. In both places the difference between the Son of God and the sons of God is that for the Christians the title is qualified by his being in Christ and led by the Spirit. No such qualifications appear in reference to Christ. Paul uses the 'Son of God' title for Christ 'absolutely'.²

By his use of the title 'Son' for Christ Jesus (e.g. Rom. 1.3, 4, 9; 5.10; 8.29; 1 Cor. 1.9; 2 Cor. 2.19; Gal. 1.16, 2.20), Paul

¹ See also J. S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ*, London 1935, p. 254.

² D. E. H. Whiteley, *The Theology of St. Paul*, Oxford (1964), p. 109.

implies that Jesus is the Heir. Because Jesus is God's Son, He is also God's Heir. As God's only-begotten Son, first-born of creation and from the dead (cf. Rom. 8.29, Col. 1.15, 18), Jesus was naturally God's Heir. The probable reason Paul did not use the title Heir is because the title Son is so much more comprehensive and implies heirship.¹

Only secondarily does the title Servant come into Paul's concept of Inheritance. If the position of the Heir was unearned or enjoyed without personal exertion of the part of the recipient, it may be that Paul was unwilling to introduce this idea into his Christology. Instead, he uses the title Servant. In Phil. 2, Paul argues that it was exactly because of Christ's willingness to put aside the privileges of divinity and become a man, indeed a servant of man, that He is worthy of the title Lord. It cannot be argued that Paul believed Jesus *had to* earn this title, but that He *did* earn it. To use the title Heir under such circumstances would be to introduce a passive factor into Jesus' messianic office, but Paul believed that Jesus chose to become Servant and willingly sacrificed Himself to redeem mankind.²

Therefore, if Paul did not use the title Heir for Jesus Christ, it was partly due to the fact that all the privileges of heirship are implied in the title Son, and that on the basis of the definition of heirship in the Old Testament and the legal systems of his day, Paul felt that the title was better suited for Christians.

3. *The Christians as Heirs*

Paul uses the title Heir for Christians four times: Gal. 3.29, 4.7; Rom. 4.13f, 8.17. As with the title 'seed of Abraham', it is always qualified by a faith relationship to Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 4.23-25; 8.9-10, 15-17; Gal. 3.29ff). Throughout his concept of Inheritance Paul argues that a man cannot be a child, son or heir of God without faith in Christ.³

¹ For a more detailed discussion of Paul's use of 'son' for Jesus, see E. Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Edinburgh (1921), pp. 408-10.

² W. D. Davies, op. cit., pp. 274-84, has convincingly shown that Paul not only believed Jesus to be the Suffering Servant, but also that this idea can be found in pre-Christian Judaism. The 'scandal' for Paul was not that the Messiah suffered and died, but that He suffered and died on a cross. The scandal of the Gospel was not the death of the Christ, but the form it took. See also R. P. Shedd, op. cit., pp. 147-8.

³ These terms are essentially synonymous. As O. Michel, *Der Brief an der Römer*, Göttingen (1957), p. 199, points out, Paul makes no theological distinction between *huios* or *teknon* when using them to refer to Christians.

The motivating force, the decisive factor in a man's sonship is his possession of the Spirit. Paul specifically identifies the Spirit as the Spirit of adoption, thus equating possession of the Spirit with possession of the position of sonship. By initiating in the heart of the believer the cry, 'Abba, Father', the Spirit makes the 'objective possibility' of the new status as son a 'subjective reality'.¹ It is the Spirit which makes it possible for Christians to call God their Father and to think of themselves as sons; '... the Spirit performs His function of establishing a relationship between the believer and Christ in order that one should share the same attitude to the Father as does Christ'.²

Once a man in Christ is assured of his sonship, the assurance of his position as heir follows. Christians are the heirs of God, and, as defined, the title fits well. The Christian cannot depend on his works to make him a son of God, nor does physical descent entitle him to that position. God sent His Son to make sons. 'This is no longer sonship by birth naturally; it is sonship by adoption eschatologically.'³ 'The goal of reconciliation toward which the Son leads us is His making us to be sons. . . . Paul shows in Rom. 8.14ff (cf. Gal. 4.6f) the way in which our sonship depends on Jesus' unique sonship. We are called to *koinōnia* with the Son of God.'⁴

Therefore, the role of the Christian is basically passive in his receiving of the position of son and heir. His one active decision is his decision of faith. He must decide for Christ.⁵ Once that step has been taken he moves into a new relationship to God. He is no longer the immature son under the Law and the power of the *stoicheia tou kosmou*, but he is a mature son, led by the Spirit. As a result of this new filial relationship he becomes an heir. As Paul puts it, 'And if you are children, you are also heirs, heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ' (Rom. 8.17).

¹ N. Q. Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul*, London (1957), p. 31.

² Ibid., p. 11. See also C. A. A. Scott, op. cit., p. 170.

³ P. Hammer, op. cit., p. 136.

⁴ O. Cullmann, *Christology*, p. 293.

⁵ On this point on which so much has been written, a statement by J. Jocz, op. cit., p. 5 can serve as a good summary. 'Through faith in Jesus Christ the believer experiences at-one-ment with God and acceptance to sonship. In the Cross of the Messiah he discovers the token of God's favour. The Cross is then the pledge of his adoption. His sonship is not a birthright, but an act of grace; he does not merit or earn his position, it is conferred on him as a special favour. This is a new experience of God, experienced not in the context of Law, but of the Gospel. It is indissolubly connected with the Son of God who gave His life for the sins of the world.'

The expression 'fellow-heirs with Christ' has an interesting allusion in it. If, as it has been argued, Paul used Roman law for illustrating his Inheritance concept, these laws provide a background for understanding a 'co-heirship'. Under Roman law it was possible for a number of people to be named by the testator as heirs. Each shared in the total assets and liabilities of the estate. That Paul reflects this idea of inheritance and co-heirship can be demonstrated by the context in which 'fellow-heirs' appears.

Immediately following his declaration of joint heirship with Christ, Paul adds the qualifying thought that the heirs will suffer with and be glorified with the Heir. In other words, each of the sons of God takes part in the fortunes of the Son of God, whether those fortunes be good or bad. This is only to be expected if they are really heirs, because each is equally involved in the blessings and obligations of the Inheritance.¹

Two further ideas should be mentioned quickly. First, it is probable that the Sitz-im-Leben of Paul's teaching on sonship is baptismal. This is especially apparent in Gal. 3.26-27. Sons of God, besides being those who have faith, are those who have incorporated themselves into the Body of Christ by means of baptism. They are those who have 'put on' Christ and have joined themselves to Him in His death, resurrection, glorification, and sonship.²

Secondly, Paul believes that by faith and adoption the Christians, or collectively the Church, become the Israel of God. The roots of this idea lie in Paul's insistence that men of faith are the true seed of Abraham. The Promise was made not just to the Jews, but to mankind in general.³

The Jews believed that they were the Elect of God. The

¹ It has been argued by P. Hammer, op. cit., pp. 118, 120, that Paul conceived of Christ as both the Heir and the Inheritance, as both the means to and the end of his inheritance concept. Two things stand in the way of accepting his thesis. First, Paul has a clear definition of the Inheritance—see the following chapter—and teaches that Christ is the God-given means by which men inherit. He never confuses the two. Secondly, in order to make Hammer's thesis acceptable, it would be necessary to translate *synklēronomoi Christou* as 'fellow-heirs of Christ'. This translation does not appear in any of the commentators consulted, and the context in which the phrase appears demands the 'with' idea because verbs compounded with *syn* appear three times in two verses: *symmartyreō*, *sympazō*, *syndochēō* (Rom. 8.16-17). Therefore, it may be concluded that Paul kept Christ as the means to the Inheritance separate from the Inheritance itself.

² For a more detailed discussion of the relationship of faith-baptism-sonship, see G. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the NT*, London (1963), pp. 146-51. See also D. E. H. Whiteley, op. cit., p. 109; P. Hammer, op. cit., p. 121.

³ J. Jocz, op. cit., p. 95.

basis of this election was twofold: God's love for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and God's love for the people of Israel as their descendants. This love was the basis of the idea found in the Psalms and the Prophets that the people of Israel were the Inheritance of God. Because they believed themselves to be the first-born son, they undoubtedly believed themselves to be the heirs of God. However, under certain conditions the first born could be disinherited (e.g. Gen. 49.3-4; Deut. 21.18-21), so that it is likely that in order to ensure their position as the favoured ones of God, the Israelites thought of themselves as God's Inheritance, His inalienable possession. God could not forsake them; His election is sure and eternal; as He cared for the Patriarchs, so will He care for their descendants.¹

It is Paul's contention that the Jews have misunderstood the intent of God's promise to Abraham. His Promise to make of Abraham a great nation was not dependent on works of the Law or on physical descent, but on faith. Israel is not a people bound by common descent but by a common faith, a faith which is to be placed in Christ. Paul does not argue that the Church inherits alongside Israel, but that the Church is Israel, for Israel is to be formed by men who had faith like Abraham.

Paul does not radically alter the Old Testament message in order to fit it into his Christian message. What he does do is to examine it in light of the fulfilment of his faith and see that Judaism had misinterpreted its call, putting itself above all other nations on account of its birthright and possession of the Torah. Paul claims that both of these are beside the point. The birthright was never intended to be decisive, and the Law was only a temporary measure until Christ came. To exalt either is to miss the point of what it meant to be the Israel of God. Now that Christ has come, Israel is formed in and by Him. Christ is the Elect One, the Son of God, the Seed of Abraham, and the men in Christ are the true Israel because they have responded in faith to God's call in Christ.

Therefore, for Paul the Church is the Israel of God according to the teachings of the Old Testament.² It is not the Church which is mistaken about its position of heirship, but the Synagogue. The Church moved beyond the Synagogue in their acceptance of the Messiah. In this way the Church is not

¹ G. F. Moore, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 535-6, 542.

² H. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election*, London (1950), p. 139.

only heir of God, but also heir of Israel's election. Election depends not on works of the Law, but on grace, promise and faith. Therefore, the Church took over Israel's position as sons and heirs of God.¹ The great nation that was to be formed from the seed of Abraham is being formed in the Church.²

In summary, the heirs of God are the sons of God who have become sons through faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ. Because they are sons, they are also heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ. The assurance of their sonship comes with the possession of the Holy Spirit, so that their sonship is not a natural one but an eschatological one. It is the sons of God in Christ who form the Israel of God, because they are related to Abraham by faith and share in the Promise made to him.

C. GENERAL SUMMARY

In answer to the question, 'who are the Heirs of God?' Paul says that they are the seed of Abraham and the sons of God.

They are the seed of Abraham because of Christ, who is the true Seed by virtue of the fact that He fulfilled the Promise which God made to Abraham. There was only one 'seed' mentioned in the Promise and that seed was not Isaac. The Seed of Abraham's Promise is the Messiah who forms the nation of God and brings to fulfilment the possession of the Inheritance, the Promised Land.

Christians are the seed of Abraham not by works of the Law or physical descent but by faith. The message of the Old Testament for Paul was that Abraham's seed were the faithful. Israel after the flesh had not been faithful; they had failed to become the Israel of God by their lack of faith which was manifest in their dependence on lineage and Law. Now Abraham was to become the father of many nations because of Christ's redemptive work. By faith in Christ men could become the seed of Abraham, be they Jew or Gentile.

They are the sons of God because of Christ. He is the only-begotten Son, the first-born of creation and from the dead, the only true Son of God. Men must be in Christ in order to be called sons or children of God. Once they are sons, assured of

¹ N. A. Dahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 214ff.

² A. Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-11. R. N. Flew, *Jesus and His Church*, London (1943), p. 102f.

their adoption by the witness of the Spirit, they are heirs of God.

As heirs they receive all that Christ received—sonship, resurrection, and glorification; and all that Israel was to receive—blessings, justification, and life with God. As heirs they are members of Christ's Body, the Church, and as such are the Elect of God. All that God promised to Abraham has been fulfilled in Christ Jesus, and men become seed of Abraham, sons of God and heirs of God when they are in Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT DO THE HEIRS INHERIT?

THE second question to be asked of Paul's concept of Inheritance is the question concerning what he considers the Inheritance to be. What do the sons of God in Christ inherit?

Paul never directs himself to the question of the Inheritance, that is to say he never bothers to define it because there is no dispute over its contents. However, a definition can be discerned in Galatians and Romans. The answer Paul gives to the question of the content of the Inheritance is that it is the Promise and Blessings of Abraham, and it is the Kingdom of God and the New Creation.

A. THE PROMISE AND BLESSINGS OF ABRAHAM

Since *klēronomia* appears only once in the passages under discussion, it is appropriate to start with an examination of that passage, Gal. 3.15-18, and work out from there to form a definition of what Paul teaches is the Inheritance.¹

In keeping with the New Testament concept of Inheritance, Paul uses K. in a text which is dealing with Abraham and the Promise. In this context Paul must have used the word to bring to mind the complex of ideas which had developed around 'inheritance' in the Old Testament and intertestamental literature. He does not essentially change these ideas. The one new thing he brings to the concept of Inheritance is a change in who is recognised as heirs; however, it is basically the same Inheritance as defined by the Old Testament.²

¹ In keeping with the practice begun in Section One, Chapter One, *klēronomia* will henceforth be referred to as K.

² C. Dietzfelbinger, *Paulus und das Alte Testament* (TEH, 95), München (1961), p. 7, ft. 2, says that Paul uses K. in Gal. 3.18, to mean 'being a son of God' and freedom from the elemental spirits of the world. Not only is this argument impossible to maintain philologically—nowhere in the papyri or the NT does K. mean anything so abstract, but generally refers to goods or property—but also the context of the verse obviously refers to the Land (see argument below). This allusion can only be eliminated by the presupposition from which Dietzfelbinger works, that Paul did not depend on the Abraham story. It has been shown above that this is emphatically not the case.

1. *The Covenant and the Inheritance*

The word *diathēkē* appears twice in Gal. 3.15-18. It is generally agreed that the word is a technical term used in Greek and Hellenistic law for 'testament', because it has that meaning in the inscriptions and papyri.¹ However, it is also agreed that Paul's use of *diathēkē* can be traced to the Septuagint and, as a result, is not dependent on the legal meaning of the term. In the Septuagint *diathēkē* is used as a translation for *berith*, so that Paul thinks of *diathēkē* as 'covenant' rather than 'testament' or 'will'.²

In most cases it does not matter whether *diathēkē* is translated 'covenant' or 'testament'. Both refer to agreements drawn up by one person in favour of another person or group of persons; neither is a contract agreed upon by two or more persons.³ The context must dictate the translation, and in Paul's letters the context usually points to 'covenant', because he uses it to refer to God's covenant with Abraham, or the covenant with Israel at Sinai.

However, when the two uses of *diathēkē* are examined in Gal. 3.15-18, it is apparent that the meanings are not at all parallel. Gal. 3.15 is an illustration from law used by Paul to cast light on the following verses, while 3.17, is a clear reference to the Abrahamic covenant. Therefore, it must be maintained that the appropriate translations according to the contexts would be 'testament' or 'will' in verse 15, and 'covenant' in verse 17.⁴

In Gal. 3.15, Paul makes the assertion that no one alters or adds a codicil to a man's valid testament. This statement has been discussed often because of its vagueness. The question most asked is from which law system Paul took his illustration. The three possible systems mentioned are Hellenistic, Jewish or Roman.

¹ G. Quell and J. Behm, TWBNT, II, p. 217. A. Deissmann, *Licht von Osten*, Tübingen (1908), p. 243.

² G. Quell and J. Behm, op. cit., p. 132. H. J. Schoeps, op. cit., p. 217.

³ W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*, Chicago (1957), p. 182.

⁴ Cf. E. Lohmeyer, *Diathēkē*, p. 138. Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, London (1955), pp. 85ff, argues that *diathēkē* in 3.15 means 'covenant'. He bases his argument on the assertion that the arguments of verses 15 and 17 are of the same type. Since *diathēkē* means 'covenant' in verse 17, it must mean 'covenant' in verse 15. He appeals to E. Burton, op. cit., who reaches the same conclusion. Both men are guilty of ignoring the context of the verses. Properly seen the legal context of verse 15, demands that *diathēkē* be translated 'testament'. Contrary to their arguments nothing is lost from the force of verse 17, by translating *diathēkē* as testament in verse 15.

The argument that Paul had Hellenistic inheritance laws in mind is usually based on the fact that Paul used the legal term *diathēkē*, or that he argued for the irrevocability of a testament. Some of the older commentators take *diathēkē* to mean an irrevocable adoption testament. More recently the background of Hellenistic law has been assumed because of the presence of the word *diathēkē*. Examined closely, neither argument is strong, and it could well be that Hellenistic law is not the background of Paul's illustration.

William Ramsay¹ maintains that the translation of *diathēkē* in verse 15 should be 'will'. However, he bases his argument on the assertions that an 'inheritance' is related to it, and that an adoption testament was the irrevocable testament of Paul's time, that is to say, in Hellenistic law in Galatia.

Although Ramsay's translation is acceptable, several objections can be raised against his supporting arguments. First, it is incorrect to make *klēronomia* in verse 18 depend on the *diathēkē* of verse 15. It depends instead on verse 17. *Diathēkē* in that verse should be translated 'covenant' and refers to God's covenant with Abraham. Verse 15 is an illustration from law which could be left out without damaging Paul's thought. The central argument of this section comes in verses 17-18. Paul makes the Law much later than the Covenant, and he insists that the Law does not alter the Covenant because it had been ratified earlier. The Inheritance comes through the Promise rather than the Law. It is incorrect to make *klēronomia* dependent on a 'last will and testament' drawn up by God in favour of the Christian. This might be the meaning behind Paul's use of *diathēkē* elsewhere,² but within the context of these verses, *klēronomia* is almost wholly dependent on the Old Testament understanding of Abraham's inheritance, and therefore is not at all dependent on the *diathēkē* of verse 15, but on the *diathēkē* of verse 17.

Secondly, in light of the fact that there is no indication of an adoption testament in the papyri, it seems impossible that it could be the type testament referred to in this verse. In Hellenistic times *diathēkē* usually referred to a 'last will', a distribution of a man's goods by testament. As such it was irrevocable only after a man died. Indeed such testaments were

¹ W. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, London (1900, 2nd ed.).

² H. J. Schoeps, op. cit., pp. 217-18.

often death-bed dispositions so that a man could be sure that his distribution of goods could not be tampered with.¹

Lastly, Ramsay's position that *oudeis* means 'no person' rather than 'no other person' or 'no one else' is not tenable.² He claims that Paul's argument is that a subsequent document drawn up by the same person does not invalidate a former document (p. 351). However, Paul's argument is that no one nullifies or adds a codicil to a valid testament. The force of the argument demands that *oudeis* be translated 'no one else', for it was possible under Hellenistic, Jewish and Roman law for a testator to alter his will or make a new one.³

Therefore, Ramsay's assertion that Paul had in mind an irrevocable adoption testament of a Hellenistic type is generally untenable. In fact, Paul's illustration is so vague that it is impossible to confidently assign it to any one system of law. This shall be seen more clearly in the following paragraphs.

Others besides Ramsay have argued that Paul was thinking of a Hellenistic will.⁴ The irrevocability of the testament plays a minor role in the argument of those who see a Hellenistic testament as the background of Paul's thinking. More often the argument is based on the proliferation of Hellenistic legal terms in the verse. One point should be raised, however. The terms involved are general legal terms that do not necessarily have to do with inheritance laws. It is possible to argue, for example, that Paul was using Greek legal terms and Roman inheritance laws. A strong argument for a Hellenistic testament cannot be built on the presence of legal terminology in a legal illustration.⁵

Because Paul was using for his illustration the irrevocability of a man's will, Ernst Bammel has argued that Paul had in mind a rabbinic testament which was called *mattanah berith* and which was irrevocable by rabbinic law. This type of testament was a death-bed disposition.⁶ The weakness of his argument

¹ Unfortunately Ramsay's book was published before the studies of Bruck and Kreller which showed that adoption by testament was not a feature of Hellenistic law. His dependence on Mitteis' views would probably have been modified by examination of these later discoveries and opinions.

² Also against H. Schlier, *Der Brief an der Galater*, Göttingen (1962, 12. Aufl.), p. 144.

³ E. Lohmeyer, *Diathēkē*, p. 136, ft. 1, says, 'Paulus also hätte seinem Vergleich den Boden entzogen, hätte er in das den Testator mit eingeschlossen gedacht.'

⁴ For example, G. Quell and J. Behm, *op. cit.*, p. 132; O. Eger, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

⁵ Cf. E. Lohmeyer, *Diathēkē*, p. 137, esp. ft. 2.

⁶ E. Bammel, 'Gottes *Diathēkē* und jüdische Rechtsdenken', NTS, 6 (1959/60), pp. 313-19.

lies in the fact that Paul never alludes to the death of the testator in 3.15, or in any of the following verses. He simply makes the statement that no one else can tamper with the valid testament of another man.¹

One feature common to both Hellenistic and Jewish testaments of Paul's time is that they were generally death-bed dispositions.² This, of course, was not the only type of testament in use. A man could draw up a will while he was in good health. However, whether drawn up in sickness or in health, the Hellenistic and Jewish testaments were generally distributions of gifts according to a man's wishes. Moreover, if they were death-bed dispositions, they were generally irrevocable.

The only way that the death of the testator might be inferred from Gal. 3.15, thereby supporting the claims for a Hellenistic or Jewish irrevocable death-bed disposition as the background of this verse, is if it could be demonstrated that *kyroō* had to refer to the ratification of the will of a deceased person. However, since it is used in the papyri to refer to the confirmation of business transactions of all kinds, the sense of the verb points to confirmation or ratification of the transactions of living persons. It implies that the testament was already in force, made valid by its execution, and not dependent for its validity on the death of the testator.³ In other words, the testament was valid at a time before the death of the testator.

Paul's illustration is so general that it could have been taken from any system of law with which Paul might have been familiar. It is so general, in fact, that it borders on error. Each of the systems mentioned as possibilities had general formalities that had to be observed when drawing up a will. If these formalities were not observed, a will might be declared invalid, even after the death of the testator. In early Greek law it was common to invalidate an adoption testament if it sought to disinherit a legal heir. By rabbinic law a first-born son could claim his rightful double portion if his father had distributed his property as an inheritance and had not given him his legal share. In Roman law a disinherited heir had many legal levers he could bring to bear in order to have his inheritance; most of these centred in finding irregularities in

¹ See Bill., III, pp. 545-53, for further examples of rabbinic testamentary law.

² R. Yaron has drawn out the comparison of these two systems in his book, *Gifts in Contemplation of Death*.

³ E. Burton, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

the form of the testament. In some cases a disinherited heir could get his inheritance back if he could produce a valid Praetorian will which designated a share for him, even if the will he produced was an earlier one. Generally speaking, however, a man's will was free from being tampered with under any system of law; this would be especially true if it had been declared valid at the time of execution.

Therefore, Paul's statement in Gal. 3.15, should be taken at face value: the valid testament of a man cannot be tampered with by outsiders. Alteration by the testator himself is not implied; the death of the testator is not implied. The comparison which Paul wishes to draw between a man's testament and God's covenant is that neither is able to be altered by outside forces.

Having made his legal illustration, Paul picks up the thread of his argument which he had begun with the questions in 3.1-5. It is within the context of this argument that the second *diathēkē* occurs. In verse 17 Paul juxtaposes the Covenant and the Law, or Abraham and Sinai. He claims that God's original plan of salvation was revealed in the covenant which he made with Abraham. The Law which appeared later did not nullify that Covenant. It was always faith that mattered.

It is important to notice that in the entire passage from 3.1 to 3.29, Paul never designated the Sinaitic Law as *diathēkē*. Only later, in 4.24, does he speak of two covenants, one of which is Sinai. His separation of Law and Covenant can be explained as a polemical device to keep separate Law and Faith. He is insistent that the Covenant of Faith means freedom and inheritance of the Promise, while adherence to the Law means slavery and disinheritance. This line of argument can be discerned in his reference to slavery to the elemental spirits and adoption to sonship (4.4-7), and in the allegory of the son of the slave woman (4.21-31).

Since both a testament and a covenant have the same essential characteristic of being the statement of the wishes of one person, Paul's parallel of a man's testament and God's covenant is entirely appropriate. However, his argument is not dependent on this parallel. The central theme of his argument is that God did not nullify or cause the Law to supersede the Abrahamic covenant. The Law cannot be considered a later covenant nor a variation on the earlier one. It is a temporary measure given

by God as a means of salvation until the fulness of time. The Law is a lesser document, mediated by angels (3.19), and remained in effect only until the Messiah came. Now that He has come, the Law serves no further purpose; it must be set aside, and the Covenant of Faith observed.¹

The relationship of the Covenant and the Inheritance is established by a negative thought. The Inheritance does not come by the Law. It could not, because it had been established by the Covenant which God made with Abraham long before the appearance of the Law. The Inheritance was a reality before the Law, and it was a reality because of God's Promise. Again the twofold emphasis of Faith and Promise is present on Paul's concept of Inheritance, and it is present because of the relationship of Covenant and Inheritance. The heirs do not inherit by means of personal exertion—works of the Law; they inherit on the basis of their acceptance of the covenant of Faith and its fulfilment in Christ Jesus. They inherit the Promise by Faith.²

2. *The Promise and the Inheritance*

The two fundamental assertions of Paul's concept of Inheritance are that men are heirs of God only when they are in Christ, and that the Inheritance is a grace gift of God based on the Promise He made to Abraham. The first has already been examined; now the second comes up for consideration.

Always in the background of Paul's teaching about the Promise and the Inheritance is the teaching of the Old Testament and the rabbis on the same subjects. It has already been demonstrated that the object of the Promise and Inheritance for the Old Testament is the Land. It remains now to outline the rabbinical teaching on the Land and its importance.

For the rabbis the Land played an important part in the life and destiny of Israel. Two general ways of teaching about the Land can be discerned in their writings. One concerns the works which must be performed in order to inherit it; the other

¹ See H. Schlier, op. cit., pp. 176-88, 'Das Problem des Gesetzes bei Paulus', for a detailed discussion, and an extensive list of literature on Paul's view of the Law.

² A. Halmel, op. cit., p. 17, makes the observation, 'Das Erbe (*klēronomia*) kommt aus der Verheissung, jener ersten *diathēkē prokekyrōmenē* Gottes, und nicht aus dem Gesetz (v. 18). Das Gesetz enthält keine Erbeinsetzung, ist demnach keine *diathēkē* (Testament) und hebt sonach jene erste testamentarische Willensäußerung eines und denselben Urhebers (Gottes) nicht auf; sondern ist nur eine spätere Zusatzbestimmung zu derselben.'

speaks of the worth of the Land itself in matters of salvation and blessings. The rabbis taught that the Land was inherited by Abraham and his descendants on account of his observance of God's laws and commandments. When Abraham asked for assurance that he would inherit (Gen. 15.8), the rabbis taught that God's answer was that Abraham's inheritance came through the merit of sacrifices.¹ They also taught that entrance into the Promised Land depended on circumcision; that is why Joshua circumcised the children of Israel before going over into the Land.² Generally speaking, therefore, the rabbis taught that the children of Israel inherited the Land by virtue of their observance of the Laws of the Torah.³

Once the Israelites were in possession of the Land, however, the rabbis believed that certain benefits were enjoyed by them solely because they were within its borders. Israel was the centre of holiness on earth; it was holier than all other nations (BT Kelim, Mishnah 6); the temple was higher than the Land, and the Land higher than all other lands (BT Zerahim 54b). Even Abraham availed himself of the merit of the Land (BT Rosh Hashanah 16b). There is some indication that the Land had atoning power, because it was important for the Jews who died outside the Land to be reburied in it in order that they might join in the resurrection.⁴ At least one reason for the holiness of the Land was that certain offerings, the first-fruits for example, could only come from there (BT Kelim 136a-b). It might be concluded, therefore, that the Law was one of the reasons for the holiness of the Land and works of the Law the key to its inheritance.

It is against this reverence for the Law as the way to the Inheritance that Paul argues. He says that God gave the Inheritance to Abraham by a Promise. In Paul's thought the Promise is equal to justification or salvation. The products of the Promise are justification (Gal. 3.21), eternal life (Rom. 4.17), sonship (Rom. 9.8, Gal. 4.28) and the Inheritance (Rom. 4.13).⁵ And the products of the Promise are not to be separated from the word of the Promise.⁶ Paul could not agree with the

¹ H. Freedman and M. Simon, *Midrash Rabba: Genesis*, I, p. 369.

² *Ibid.*, p. 394.

³ H. Freedman and M. Simon, *Midrash Rabba: Numbers*, I, p. 868.

⁴ For a more thorough discussion of this see C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology*, New York (1960), pp. 66off.

⁵ F. Baumgärtel, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁶ J. Schniewind and G. Friedrich, *TWBNT*, II, p. 580.

rabbis that Abraham observed the Torah and then received the Land by the Promise. Abraham had the Inheritance on the ground of his faith in God's Promise. The Inheritance was a grace gift; it was not a reward for the observance of the Law. Therefore, possession of the Inheritance, both for Abraham and his seed, is independent of the Law.¹

The Promise that Paul alludes to in Gal. 3.18, is God's promise to Abraham that he would have numerous descendants, be a great nation, and inherit a Land.² By using K. (3.18) in the context of the Promise, however, he probably is most concerned to refer to the Land promise.³ One must remember, however, that the concept of the Land had been expanded in late Judaism, so that it was impossible to think of it in geographical terms only. The Land symbolised holiness, blessing, salvation. The promise of the Land and that of being a blessing to all nations were frequently one and the same thing in the rabbis.⁴

For Paul the Land could not be considered an end in itself, but, like the authors of late Judaism and the rabbis, it was symbolic of something more important. This is probably the reason why the Land of Canaan is never mentioned in his letters, a strange omission considering its importance for Jewish theology. Examined from another perspective, however, Paul did not ignore or omit the Land from his theology, he simply universalised it.⁵ It is not geographical Palestine that was important, but the Inheritance promised to Abraham. He was to be 'heir of the world' (Rom. 4.13). God never meant the descendants of Abraham to remain in Canaan; they were to spread themselves around the world, inheriting it. The possibility of this Inheritance comes in Christ. Abraham's seed can inherit the world because they are in Christ who is Lord of the world. Here again the Inheritance is bound up with the Messianic fulfilment of the Promise to Abraham.⁶

¹ B. Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the NT*, Edinburgh (1885), vol. I, pp. 373ff. C. Müller, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk*, Göttingen (1964), p. 52, points out that not only is the promise (inheritance) independent of the Law, it is endangered by it, and the Law must be destroyed before the Promise is fully effective (also p. 95).

² O. Kuss, *Der Römerbrief*, Regensburg (1957), p. 187. W. Sanday and A. Headlam, *Romans*, Edinburgh (1902), p. 111.

³ D. Daube, *NT and Rabbinic Judaism*, p. 438, says that Gal. 3.18, refers to the promise of the Land, and nothing else.

⁴ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁵ Against C. Dietzfelbinger, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁶ A. Nygren, *Der Römerbrief*, Göttingen (1951), p. 133.

Paul is also interested in the symbolism of the Land. The Inheritance can never be just the Land, but it must include all that the Land stands for—salvation and eternal life. These things proceed from possession of the Land of the Inheritance. More will be said of this below.

Paul does not say in Gal. 3.18, that the seed of Abraham were given the Inheritance by the Promise, but he does make that point later when he says that the heirs 'according to the Promise' are the Christians who are the seed of Abraham. Therefore, Paul differs from the rabbis in the matter of who the heirs are, and insists that all men could enjoy the Promise of Abraham in Christ and become heirs of the world. '... Paul takes the Abrahamic Promise and places it on a universal-eschatological plane—the Land is the world, and the "seed" are all peoples.'¹

By his use of the Promise Paul draws a direct line of descent from Abraham to Christ to the Christians. Abraham was given the Inheritance by the Promise; Christ is the fulfilment of that Promise; the seed of Abraham are heirs according to the Promise. There is an undeniable pattern of Heilsgeschichte here. The Promise and the Inheritance are the same for Abraham as they are for Paul.

In summary, Paul contends that the Christians inherit the blessings of Abraham which are based on the Covenant of Faith and the Promise, because they are the seed of Abraham and thereby heirs. The central passage of this teaching is Gal. 3.15-29.

In the first half of his argument Paul talks about the Covenant. While he does distinguish between the legal (testament) and the religious (covenant) meanings of *diathēkē*, the point of his argument is not what type of covenant God made with Abraham, but that the Law did not supersede the Covenant. The Covenant was based on the Promise, and Abraham received the Inheritance because of his faith. The same condition of faith is necessary if the seed of Abraham are to inherit. The Inheritance does not come by Law.

In the second half of his argument Paul says that the Inheritance comes through the Promise. The promise to Abraham was that he would have descendants, be a great nation, be a blessing to all nations and inherit the Land. The symbol of the

¹ U. Wilckens 'Die Rechtfertigung', pp. 124-5 (my translation).

Promise was the Land. The fulfilment of the Promise came in Christ. Those in Christ inherit the Land and partake in salvation, justification and eternal life; or, in other words, they dwell in the Promised Land. The Inheritance is based on the Promise and is the Promise.

B. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE NEW CREATION

Only in Gal. 3 does Paul outline or define the Inheritance as the Promise and Blessings of Abraham. He implies it in other places but never gives it fuller expression. The majority of his writings show that he had another side to his definition of Inheritance. In every place where Paul uses the verb *klēronomeō*, except in Gal. 4.30, which is a quotation from the Old Testament, the object of that verb is the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6.9-10, 15.50; Gal. 5.21). Also he speaks of the seed of Abraham and the sons of God as heirs of the world (Rom. 4.13), and as waiting for the New Creation (Rom. 8.19-23). It remains, therefore, to examine the Kingdom and the New Creation in the context of his Inheritance concept.

1. *The Kingdom of God*

It is impossible within the scope of this paper to define the Kingdom. The most that can be done is briefly to show how the Kingdom became the content of the Inheritance.

The possession of the Land has been eschatologised and spiritualised by the post-exilic authors of Judaism. Salvation came to be described as 'having a lot in the World to Come'.¹ In late Jewish literature the verb *klēronomeō* was a technical eschatological term for sharing in the coming kingdom.² Therefore, Paul was not coining a new expression when he spoke of 'inheriting the Kingdom'. The phrase and concept have roots deep in Judaism.³

The Land of Canaan emerges as the Kingdom of God in the writings of Paul. The Kingdom of God replaced Palestine as the centre of all blessings and salvation. Palestine no longer enjoyed exclusive possession of the location of God's saving activity. It was universalised to become the Kingdom. It was the Kingdom as the place of God's reign, and as the rule of

¹ G. F. Moore, *op. cit.*, I, p. 94.

² J. Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise*, p. 68.

³ Cf. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *I Corinthians*, Edinburgh (1914), p. 576.

God, where the fulfilment of the Promise was to take place.

Paul assigned one other important characteristic of the Land to the Kingdom. The Kingdom was the grace gift of God to His people. God gives the Kingdom; men can do nothing to earn it.¹

The Kingdom, therefore, can be called the Inheritance because it has all the characteristics of the Inheritance. It is the universal-spiritual Land which is received as a grace gift. The people of God can do nothing to earn it, nor do they merit it. They inherit the Kingdom solely on the basis of the faith relationship which they have to God in Christ.

The Kingdom also fulfils the Old Testament characteristic as the Land-inheritance, because it is the place where the people of God will be gathered into a great nation and will enjoy the full blessings of the reign of God. This, then, is how the Land was conceived as, or developed into, the kingdom, and why the Kingdom came to be called the Inheritance.²

2. *The New Creation*

Now the question can be asked again, what happened to the Land as a geographical reality in Paul's concept of Inheritance? Did his concept of the Kingdom so completely absorb it that it was no longer necessary to discuss the Land as the Inheritance? The answers to these questions can be found in Paul's teaching on the World and the New Creation as the Inheritance.

In Rom. 4.13, Paul says that Abraham and his descendants are heirs of the world.³ Their heirship is dependent on their faith. The seed of Abraham are heirs of the world through their faith in Jesus Christ who is Lord of the world (Rom. 4.13-25; Col. 1.15-20).⁴

¹ K. L. Schmidt, TWBNT, I, pp. 586, 588.

² It is well known that the literature on the Kingdom is enormous, and also that Paul does not say much about the Kingdom. For an excellent survey, see J. Bright, *The Kingdom of God*, New York (1953), and the literature he mentions.

³ It is likely that in using *kosmos* here instead of *gē*, Paul is dependent upon an idea out of late Judaism. As shown above, the expression 'to inherit the whole earth' is a common expression in intertestamental literature referring to the inheritance of Abraham and his seed. (See O. Michel, *Der Römerbrief*, p. 121, who cites Sirach 44.21; Jubilees 20.14, 32.19; Enoch 5.7; and F. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans*, London (1961), p. 120, who points out in a footnote that the expansion of the inheritance idea from Canaan to the whole earth took place in late Judaism.) Paul uses *kosmos* to eliminate any dependence on Palestine; that is to say, he wanted to be sure he severed all associations with Palestine and refer only to the broader inheritance of Abraham, the 'world'.

⁴ F. W. Kobling, 'Biblische Erörterung: Über *kléronomia tou kosmou*, Römer. 4.13', TSK, 18 (1845), pp. 695-6.

Thus Paul introduces the Land into his Inheritance concept. He does not say that Abraham and his descendants will inherit the World to Come, but that they are heirs of the World. Their Inheritance has geographical reality.

The geographical reality of the Land never ceases to play an important part in Paul's concept of Inheritance. He simply makes the Land the eschatological world. To a certain extent the authors of late Judaism did the same thing. The inheritance of Israel for them was a new world, purged by fire, free from all uncleanness, a proper inheritance for the people of God. However, Palestine retained a high place of importance. Not so for Paul. He universalises Palestine. If Jesus is the Lord of the world, then the world is the arena in which He works and brings salvation. Paul puts away all nationalistic aspirations for the importance of Palestine and makes the Inheritance of the believers the entire world.¹

Because of his belief in Christ as the Lord of Creation, Paul believed that with His coming there came also the New Creation.² The work and lordship of the Messiah was not to be limited to Palestine but was to be properly carried out in the New Creation. Moreover, this New Creation was synonymous with the eschatological Land or World, and, therefore, it can also be called the Inheritance of the Christians. The passage where Paul brings this to expression is Rom. 8.17-23.³

In this passage Paul implies that creation somehow came under the influence of evil in the fall of Adam.⁴ The Fall had cosmological significance. Creation became subject to the *stoicheia tou kosmou*. Paul says that creation is still under the power of these evil forces and is groaning in travail until it is free from corruption and obtains liberty (8.20-21).⁵ He presupposes the involvement of creation in the Fall; he does not speculate about how it happened. He works from the premise

¹ A. Nygren, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

² W. D. Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-41.

³ It is of some importance to note that Paul brings *ktisis* into the context of his teaching on sonship-heirship in this passage. There is no good reason to do so unless he wanted to introduce the Inheritance (Kingdom of God, New Creation) into his teaching on heirship as he did when he used *kosmos* in Rom. 4.13ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38. He cites rabbinic parallels for this belief.

⁵ O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. 103, points out that *ktisis* here means creatures other than man. He is supported in this by W. Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 547. However, W. Foerster, TWBNT, III, p. 1031, and W. D. Stacey, 'Paul's Certainties II: God's Purpose in Creation—Romans 8.22-23', *ExT*, 69 (1957-8), p. 179, argue that *ktisis* means the whole created order, man included.

that creation is subject to futility (8.20). What he is concerned to show is that creation will be redeemed; it will be free from corruption. He is concerned to show that Creation will be a suitable Inheritance for the people of God.

Also in this passage Paul says that Christians will be glorified with the Lord (8.17). Part of this glorification will be the redemption of the body (8.23, cf. 1 Cor. 15.50), and he implies that the other part will be the renewal and subsequent possession of the redeemed world, the New Creation, as the Inheritance. In other words, glorification will be both a state in which the Christian lives—in a redeemed body—and a place in which to live—the New Creation.

Therefore, *ktisis* looks back not only to creation but also looks forward to the New Creation, the Inheritance.¹ The promise to Abraham and his seed for a Land-inheritance is fulfilled in the New Creation. The New Creation brought by Christ is the suitable Inheritance of the people of God. Not only did Christ's redeeming death make possible the establishment of the people of God, but also it brings about the release of the world from the power of the evil spirits which have subjected it so that a New Creation is created (1 Cor. 15.21-28). This New Creation comes fully into existence in the eschatological world and is created to provide a Land in which the people of God might establish themselves, where they can form the nation of God. In this way the New Creation becomes the fulfilment of the Promise for a Land, and consequently can be called the Inheritance. Palestine is not forgotten; it is expanded. Therefore, the Land plays a very real role in Paul's concept of Inheritance in spite of the fact that he never mentions it in his letters.

There is probably another reason why Paul did not refer to the Land of Canaan in his writings. If it is true that the Land for the rabbis had a type of redemptive quality, Paul would surely want to avoid that idea in his teachings. The Land is a neutral factor in salvation; that is to say, it is part of that which is inherited and not the means by which the Inheritance is obtained. Paul, in his concern to stress the centrality of God's redemptive act in Christ, would naturally seek to avoid the

¹ O. Michel, *Der Römerbrief*, p. 202, says that *ktisis* 'ist also belebter und beseelter "Kosmos"'. If so, one should not read Rom. 8 without keeping in mind Rom. 4.13.

particularism associated with the concept of the Land which was held in late Judaism. Paul wanted to stress that a man had to be in Christ, not in Canaan, if he was to be an heir.

As the apostle to the Gentiles Paul could be expected to avoid references to the Land. In accordance with the teaching of Jesus, who told the Samaritan woman that God could be worshipped 'outside' the land (John 4.16-26), Paul is concerned to show that the true inheritance of the people of God is the kosmos, or the whole earth. If Jesus is Lord of Creation, then Creation is the Inheritance. The Land cannot serve particularistic ends; the Land of Canaan has become universalised. The seed of Abraham inherit the whole earth not because of the merit of the Land, but because they are fellow-heirs with Jesus Christ, the Lord of Creation.¹

In summary, if one were to take only the object of the verb 'to inherit', then the Inheritance for Paul was the Kingdom of God. In designating it thus, he follows in the tradition of late Judaism and the rest of the New Testament. The Kingdom is the Inheritance because it has all the characteristics assigned to the Inheritance. It is the place where God's people are formed into a Holy Nation and live under the rule of God.

However, the Kingdom of God is more universal than the original Inheritance, which was only the Land. When one searches for the Land in Paul's concept, it emerges as the redeemed world or the New Creation which Christ brought as Lord of the Creation. The New Creation is the Land where the Kingdom of God is located, and therefore it also can be called the Inheritance.

C. THE WORLD TO COME—THE CONDITIONS OF INHERITANCE

Besides assigning some content to the Inheritance, a task which is almost impossible to do systematically, it is also necessary to take note of the qualifications which Paul places upon entrance into the Inheritance.

1. *The Rabbinic Conditions*

Paul has rabbinic precedent for assigning conditions for

¹ To rephrase footnote 4 on page 32, for Paul it was possible to inherit the whole earth without Palestine.

entrance into the Inheritance, for, although it is true that the rabbis believed that 'a lot in the world to come' was given Israel on the basis of God's electing love for the Patriarchs and their descendants, their writings still contain many qualifications of various kinds which must be met by the man seeking assurance of his Inheritance. These qualifications can be either positive or negative. Within these two categories there is an immense amount of variation, so that a single, commonly used set of conditions is impossible to discern. Only two conditions emerge most often: membership in the nation of Israel, and study of the Torah.

The positive qualifications centre in the study of the Torah and membership in the nation of Israel. A man who studies the Scriptures, the mishnaḥs, and the Torah is worthy of inheriting this world and the world to come (BT Hullin 44b; Aboth II Mishnah 7, Aboth VI Bariatha 7; Aboth Zorah 3b; Pe'ah I.1; Kiddushin 39b; Peshahim 113a; Sanhedrin 89b). The man who does good deeds inherits the world, and these good deeds precede him into the coming world, bearing witness for him there; the same is true for the good deeds of Israel ('Abodah Zorah 2a, 4b-5a; Pe'ah I.1). Also, all the people of Israel and he who lives in Israel will have a share in the world to come (Aboth V.19; Hagigah 3a; Pesahim 113a; Kethuboth 111a; Sanhedrin 66a). Apparently, therefore, for a man to inherit the World to Come he must study and observe the commandments of the Torah and be a member of the people of Israel.

The rabbis do list some things that can explicitly disqualify a man from sharing in the Inheritance, for obviously the Gentiles are implicitly disinherited by the conditions listed above. Some of the explicit teachings on disinheritance are: he who says the Torah is not from Heaven and that resurrection is not taught in the Torah (Abodah Zorah 18a); who defiles the sacred food, despises the festivals, nullifies the covenant of Abraham (covers up circumcision), interprets the Torah not according to *halachah*, publicly shames his neighbour (Sanhedrin 99a, 107a); who is a member of the generation of the Flood, the dispersion, Sodom, spies for Israel, the wilderness, or the assembly of Korah (Sanhedrin 107b-108a); shall not inherit. Obviously there is little or no pattern here, but the general trend seems to be to disqualify anyone who despises

Israel or the Torah, or who deliberately transgresses the commandments of God.¹

It might also be pointed out that the rabbis had no unified conception of the World to Come. For some it referred to the Messianic days and the purified earth, 'an earth of prosperity, righteousness and peace, and age when Israel shall live in the Land under the rule of the Messiah-King'.² But then again, the Messianic age was to be consummated by the End, when there would be the resurrection and the last judgment. This was followed by the World to Come.

Perhaps the one thing that the rabbis did agree on was that the righteous of Israel would have a share in the World to Come. However, even then some rabbis excluded some classes of Israelites. The closest one can come to a categorical statement concerning the rabbinic teaching on the World to Come is that they generally held that all Israel would be saved.³

2. *Pauline Conditions*

Paul's thought parallels that of the rabbis closely, but it is perhaps not so detailed. His categories, if one studies the passages where 'to inherit' occurs, are almost exclusively negative. However, the implied positive characteristic is that a man be in Christ; if he is in Christ, he obtains the Inheritance.

In the four passages where *klēronomeō* occurs, only two bear on the point under discussion: 1 Cor. 6.9-10 and Gal. 5.21. The other two, 1 Cor. 15.50 and Gal. 4.24, are qualifications of sorts, but they are secondary to the theme of their contexts. For example, in 1 Cor. 15 Paul is talking of the resurrection of Christ and the believer; in verse 50 he says that 'flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdom'. His point is that those who are alive at the Parousia will be changed; they will experience the redemption of their bodies and have the glorious body of their Lord.⁴ Becoming a new creature is a condition of entrance into

¹ See also G. F. Moore, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 386-9.

² C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *op. cit.*, p. 581.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 606. All of Chapter 36 of this excellent work is devoted to a study of 'The Life to Come'. The study is prefaced by the remark that 'there is little system in the sayings and imaginings about the future life. The belief in God's mercy and loving kindness constantly breaks through' (p. 582), but this is the only general characteristic that the anthologists discern. Cf. G. F. Moore, *op. cit.*, II, p. 391, 'The ambiguity exists in the use of the "World to Come" which is sometimes the messianic age, sometimes the new order of things after the resurrection, and . . . occasionally the state of the soul between death and resurrection.'

⁴ J. Jeremias, 'Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God', NTS, 2 (1955/56), pp. 558-9.

the New Creation. In Gal. 4.24, Paul says that the son of the slave woman (those who follow the Law) shall not inherit with the son of the free (those who are seed of Abraham by faith). In both passages the primary condition of Inheritance is that a man be in Christ.

The other two passages contain a definite list of things a man must avoid if he wishes to inherit. The list deals almost exclusively with moral behaviour. Paul says that those who are unrighteous and engage in the works of the flesh shall not inherit the Kingdom. Evidently this teaching was a regular part of his missionary message, for he reminds the Galatians that he had warned them before that immoral behaviour would disqualify them as heirs.

The obvious import of this teaching is that a Christian could disqualify himself for heirship. Since Paul was writing to churches, it cannot be assumed that this teaching was meant for people outside the church. Paul plainly says that members of the Body of Christ can disqualify themselves if they persist in engaging in immoral behaviour. Even though they participate in the Kingdom in so far as it is manifest in the Church, they will not inherit the future Kingdom as it is manifest in the New Creation.

In both places Paul bases his argument on the possession of the Spirit by the Christians. In 1 Corinthians he reminds them that they had been justified by Christ and the Spirit (6.11) and that their bodies are temples of the Spirit (6.19). In Galatians he juxtaposes works of the flesh with the fruits of the Spirit (5.19-24). The indicative of the possession of the Spirit results in the imperative that Christians should walk in the Spirit. If a man knows the Spirit of adoption, he ought to behave as a son. More will be said of this below.

Therefore, even the negative conditions look back to being in Christ. If a man is truly in Christ, his works will show it. If not, his works will disqualify him as an heir of the Kingdom. However, as a son of God, he has possession of the power to behave as a son ought in that he possesses the Spirit. The negative conditions are not impossible to achieve because of the state in which the son lives; he lives in the Spirit. His works only need to show that he walks by the Spirit. It is the power of the Spirit, both in adoption and sonship, which guarantees the Inheritance.

In summary, both Paul and the rabbis had conditions which they placed on entrance into the Inheritance. For the rabbis the positive conditions were observance of the Law and membership in the people of Israel; the negative conditions were varied, but generally they centred on failure to observe the Torah. Paul's conditions centred on being in Christ. When a man was in Christ, he had entrance into the Kingdom, the Inheritance. However, a man in Christ could disqualify himself by immoral behaviour, and he was expected to live as a son of God should. Moreover, because he possessed the Spirit, he had the power to live like a son and become an heir.

D. THE INHERITANCE—SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Now all the pieces of the arguments and descriptions must be drawn together and fit into a complete picture of what Paul conceives of as the Inheritance.

I. 'Inheritance'

It is obvious that Paul's concept of Inheritance cannot be pictured from his one use of the word *kléronomia* in Gal. 3.18. However, this passage must be considered the cornerstone of his conception, for by analogy and direct statement within this passage Paul succeeds in giving an outline of what he considers the Inheritance to be.¹

By placing *kléronomia* in context with the Abrahamic covenant and the Promise, Paul shows that he depends on the Old Testament concept of Inheritance. His use of K. is dependent on the Septuagint and reflects the Old Testament teaching that descendants of Abraham were to have an inheritance based on the Promise God made to Abraham. Paul believes that the Inheritance promised to Abraham was brought by Christ, since Christ is the fulfilment of the Promise on which the Inheritance depends. Thus, men in Christ have access to the Abrahamic Inheritance. They will be the great nation of God and will dwell in the Kingdom of God.

However, the legal idea of inheritance, the legal picture it

¹ E. Ellis, op. cit., p. 124, says concerning the importance of Gal. 3, '... the doctrine of salvation by faith and inclusion of the Gentiles, so fully developed in Romans, as well as Paul's view of Israel, are found in nucleus in Gal. 3. . . . The Abrahamic covenant is of faith (v. 6), includes the Gentiles (v. 8), and has Christ as its true seed or heir (vv. 16, 29); neither physical descent nor works of the Law avail to secure participation in it.'

brings to mind, cannot be completely put aside. While it is true that Paul does not believe that Christians inherit by any process of law, it is not true that there is no relationship between the legal and religious uses of the word. The Inheritance is based on a Covenant, a one-sided contract between two parties, God and man. The men who inherit are sons of God; they inherit only because of their filial relationship to Him. The Inheritance they receive is an inalienable possession; it cannot be taken from them as long as they do not disqualify themselves. It is also a patrimony of sorts; it cannot be sold, divided, or shared outside the family of God. As joint-heirs men share in the responsibility of the inheritance, accepting both its blessings and liabilities—glorification and suffering. Therefore, it is possible to say that the legal picture of Inheritance calls to mind is analogous to the religious picture of Inheritance.¹

2. 'To Inherit'

Although it is possible to translate *klēronomeō* as 'to receive goods', within the context of Paul's thought its chief meaning is 'to inherit'. The context demands this because Paul believes the Christian to be in a child-Father relationship to God²; that which they receive from Him, they inherit.

This relationship is established by the redemption accomplished by Christ on the Cross. Christ bought men free from the slavery to the invisible powers of this world. By faith men receive the Spirit which witnesses to their adoption and new relationship to Christ. Because of their adoption by God, Christians have the Inheritance. However, they are not heirs by their own right, but only as joint-heirs with Christ.³

That which men inherit is the Kingdom of God. Behind this lies the conception of the land of Canaan as the Kingdom⁴; that is to say, it is the place where God dwells, the holiest of places, the centre of salvation. The development of this idea can be seen in the Old Testament and late Judaism. The possession of the Land became so important that it was synonymous with God's highest favour and blessings.⁵ The Land symbolised for Israel all that God could give to His people.

¹ Against E. Lohmeyer, *Diathēkē*, p. 101.

² Bill., I, p. 829.

³ C. K. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁴ M. Conrat, 'Das Erbrecht im Galaterbrief', ZNW, 5 (1904), p. 210.

⁵ W. Hauck, 'Exegetischer Versuch über Galater 3, 15-29', TSK, 35 (1862), p. 533.

However, for Paul the Kingdom of God became the Inheritance because it included all that the Land stood for and was more universal than the Land. The Kingdom not only included all the people of the earth who joined themselves to Christ, but also the World itself. Palestine was no longer the exclusive place of God's blessings and salvation. The New Creation, the redeemed world, took its place and became the eschatological site of God's Kingdom. Therefore, the Kingdom represents both the divine life and the divine location.¹

Therefore, when Paul speaks of 'heirs of the world', he looks back to the Promise to Abraham and summarises it as this, and looks forward to the fulfilment of Abraham's Promise in the Kingdom of God. The Inheritance is everything that God promised and gave to Abraham—justification, formation of the people of God, a Land in the form of the New Creation, and the future blessed existence that is part of living in the realm of the fulfilled Promise. The Inheritance is living in the World where God rules, hence it is best summarised by the designation, 'the Kingdom of God'.

¹ I agree with R. H. Charles, *Religious Development between the Old and New Testaments*, London (1914), pp. 47-8, who takes exception with G. Dalman and his definition of the Kingdom. Charles defines the Kingdom as 'the divine community in which the will of God will be perfectly realised'.

CHAPTER THREE

WHEN DO THE HEIRS INHERIT?

THE final major question to be asked of Paul's concept of Inheritance inquires as to the time when the Inheritance is to be inherited. In other words, when can the heirs expect to inherit the promised Inheritance?

There are three general answers that can be given to this question. The heirs have already received the Inheritance in so far as they have been given a down payment and promised the fulfilment of their position in Christ. The heirs have not yet inherited in that they have only received a down payment on the full Inheritance which is to come. The third answer is a combination of these two, for processes and events which have effect already only realise completion at the End.

Therefore, generally speaking, the eschatological pattern of Inheritance in Paul is 'already fulfilled, but not yet completed'. Even those things which are mainly one or the other have present or future ramifications. However, for the sake of clarifying the eschatological aspects of the different features of Paul's Inheritance concept, three answers will be given to the 'When?' of Inheritance: already, not yet, and already but not yet.

A. THE 'ALREADY' OF INHERITANCE

The mainly 'already' of Inheritance in Paul can be demonstrated in two areas: the work of Christ and the obligations of sonship.

1. *The Work of Christ*

Since Paul's concept of Inheritance is Christocentric, it is to be expected that part of the 'already' of Inheritance is the work of Christ. This can be seen in each of the passages under discussion.

In Gal. 3, the place of Christ in Inheritance is pictured by Paul in the role of fulfilment. Christ is the fulfilment of the Promise made to Abraham.¹ In Him the fulfilment of the

¹ C. Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

promise that the seed of Abraham should be a great nation and obtain the Inheritance is made possible. This promise is fulfilled because in Christ all men, whether they be Jew or Gentile, slave or free, circumcised or uncircumcised, can be justified by faith and become the seed of Abraham, the people of God.

Paul puts the same idea a different way in Gal. 4. In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son to redeem men from the slavery to the evil spirits of this world, so that they might become sons of God, thereby forming the people of God.

In Rom. 4, Paul elaborates on Gal. 3. He sees the 'already' of Christ's work as creating the possibility of faith. Paul argues that the type faith which Abraham had and which caused him to be reckoned as righteous, is the type faith which is now possible in Christ. Because of Christ the Law has been superseded. The reckoning of righteousness to Abraham was not for his sake alone, but for the sake of all who believe in God (4.22-25). As God acted redemptively because of Abraham's faith, so He acts redemptively for the sake of those who believe that He has already sent His Son to die and be raised again for their justification (4.24-25). Those who believe are 'heirs of the world' with Abraham, and thereby are the people of God.

In Rom. 8, Paul implies that the work of Christ not only looks back and fulfils, but also looks forward and fulfils. The already of Christ's work not only brings to culmination the unfulfilled promises of the past but also guarantees future fulfilment. He implies this by saying that the already accomplished work of Christ sets men free from the power of the Flesh—the redemption from the *stoicheia tou kosmou* in Gal. 4, is a parallel here—so that they might live in the Spirit. Since the life in the Spirit is essentially a life lived in the New Aeon, Christ's redemptive work brings the future into the present. Because of His death and resurrection Christ has brought the operation of the Holy Spirit into the lives of the sons of God.¹

Therefore Paul considers the redemptive work of Christ to be a major factor in the already of Inheritance. Christ has come; He is the Son and Heir, the Seed of Abraham and the

¹ P. Hammer, op. cit., p. 86, puts it this way: 'It is the future which has entered into the present in Christ; that is, whatever happens in the future is not different from what has already happened in Christ. The sonship has already been established, and the sons are already heirs. . . .'

fulfilment of God's Promise to Abraham. In Him the means to entering the Inheritance is present.

2. *The Obligations of Sonship*

Perhaps the aspect of Paul's concept of Inheritance which is most characteristically 'already' is the obligation of sonship. Since men are already sons and heirs in Christ, they already assume the obligations of a son of God. The two obligations which occur most characteristically in the 'inheritance' passages are the obligations of ethical behaviour befitting a son, and the condition or obligation of suffering with and in Christ (1 Cor. 6.9-10; Gal. 5.21; Rom. 8.1-23; Gal. 4.4-7).

(a) *The Ethical Obligation*

The father-son metaphor occurs throughout the Bible as describing the mutual relationship of God to man, man to God. It was first applied to Israel on the basis of the covenant relationship which they had to Yahweh. With the rise of monotheism, universalism, and the concept of God's sovereignty over the universe, the fatherhood of God was applied to mankind. With the advent of Jesus it was used to describe His relationship to God. Throughout the Bible,

sonship connotes loyalty, obedience, imitation and responsive love. Israel was adopted as a son of Yahweh when the people bound themselves to obey His law. So, in Jesus' teaching, men become sons of God when, like Him, they love their enemies, when they are merciful as their Father is merciful, when they receive the Kingdom as little children. . . . Paul's teaching is in harmony with this. He teaches that God loves men in the fullest possible sense, while they are yet sinners, but they are adopted as sons of God only when they enter into union with Christ and are guided by the Holy Spirit.¹

In this faith union, therefore, a new relationship is created which depends not only on divine action but also on human response. The sons of God are to respond in loyalty and obedience to the love and loyalty which the Father has demonstrated in the sending of His Son and the Holy Spirit. If the new relationship creates freedom (Gal. 4.21-5.1), it is the freedom to serve in the spirit of a loving son.²

This is the implication of adoption. The Christian has been redeemed from the power of this world and been given the

¹ C. H. Dodd, *Romans*, London (1932), p. 131.

² C. A. A. Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-1.

power of the Spirit to enable him to serve as a son ought. If it is correct that Paul had *patria potestas* in mind as a power analogous to the power under which the Christians stand, and if he conceived of the *pater familias* as a figure analogous to God, the description of the Christian as a son of God is very instructive. As *pater familias* God holds absolute sway over the destiny of His family whom He loves. He can expect loyalty and obedience from His family.

However, regardless of the background of the illustration or metaphor of adoption, it is Paul's main concern to show that God's loving care for His sons should issue in a response of loving obedience from them. If it does not, Paul is willing to say that the sons stand in danger of losing their Inheritance.¹

Parallels for Paul's attitude can be found in the rabbis. Their conviction that certain conditions had to be met in order for a man to inherit the World to Come caused them to list good deeds as important for inheritance, and immoral deeds as cause for disinheritance. They also felt that a man's good deeds proceeded him into the Coming World and witnessed for him at the Last Judgment. While Paul insists that good works will not result in the salvation of a man, he does insist that good works are the result of a man's salvation. If a man is in Christ, his moral behaviour should indicate it. Some moral conditions must be met if a man is to inherit the Kingdom, for those who continue to live in the flesh, consistently rejecting the life of the Spirit, 'reap corruption' (Gal. 6.8, cf. Rom. 8.5ff).

Paul points out that as sons Christians receive that which is adequate to respond in love to God. As sons Christians have been given the Holy Spirit. Because of his faith union with Christ, man has been given the strength of the Spirit to overcome the hinderances of the Flesh. In the Spirit he has the strength to respond to God's love in love, loyalty and obedience. He is free to serve God. Therefore, God has not demanded of His sons that which is impossible to give. In Christ and through the Spirit man can behave as a son should.

Friedrich Gogarten² has pointed out another important obligation of being a son and heir of God. He says that Paul in Gal. 4.4ff, wants to show that there is a change in man's rela-

¹ Cf. T. W. Manson, op. cit., p. 291, ft. 4.

² F. Gogarten, 'Theologie und Geschichte', ZTK, 50 (1953), pp. 339-94; see esp. pp. 354ff. See also remarks in H. Thielicke, *Theologische Ethik*, II/1, Tübingen (1955), p. 53.

tionship to the world, as well as to God, when he is in Christ. He goes from slave to the evil spirits of this world to heir of the world, from immaturity to maturity. Therefore, he becomes responsible for his inheritance. As a mature son he must be aware that his inheritance is God's creation, and as God's heir he will be held responsible for it. He is to be concerned for it as his Father is concerned for it.

Therefore, Paul contends that the man in Christ, as a son and heir of God, is obligated to fulfil already the moral and ethical responsibilities of his position. He is provided with the power of the Spirit so that there is no reason why he should ultimately fail. However, if he continues to live in the Flesh, in slavery to the *stoicheia*, he will be disqualified as an heir and shall not inherit the Kingdom.¹ The freedom of the man as son and heir is a controlled freedom. The 'indicative' of living in the Spirit is tempered by the 'imperative' of walking in the Spirit. There is a moral restraint in the imperative of sonship, and this moral restraint is an obligation of sonship.

(b) *The 'Condition' of Suffering*

In Rom. 8.17, Paul declares that one of the present results of being in Christ, of being a fellow-heir with Him, is suffering with Him.² If a man is an heir, he must expect one of the obligations of his position to be bearing the experience of suffering.³

To a certain extent Paul had rabbinic precedent for this teaching. The Rabbis taught that the righteous can be expected to bear suffering as a test of the Lord of their faithfulness. In fact, God gives Israel's three most precious gifts—the Torah, the land of Israel, and the World to Come—only through suffering (BT Berakoth 5a). Suffering is precious; one proof of this is that it was suffering and not the Torah that brought Mannasseh back to the right path (BT Sanhedrin 101a-b,

¹ G. F. Thomas, *Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy*, New York (1955), p. 91, says, 'In short, while Paul rejects the Law as the way to salvation, he never dreams of freeing the Christian from the moral requirements of the Law.' N. Dahl, *op. cit.*, p. 217, says 'Diejenigen, die durch den Glauben Kinder Abrahams sind, müssen als das heilige Volk Gottes leben.'

² R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the NT*, Cambridge (1961), p. 237, says that *eiper* is a conditional conjunction. Therefore, it can be said that Paul thought of suffering as a condition present in heirship.

³ Cf. B. M. Ahern, 'The Fellowship of His Sufferings', *CBQ*, 22 (1960), pp. 1-32; H. H. Graham, 'Continuity and Discontinuity in the Thought of St. Paul', *ATR*, 38 (1956), p. 143; G. Bornkamm, 'Sohnschaft und Leiden', *Judentum, Urchristentum und Kirche*, hrsg. von W. Eltester, Berlin (1960), pp. 188-98.

Baba Mezia 85a). However, suffering can be used to point out unrighteousness caused by the lack of the study of the Torah (BT Berakoth 5a).

The rabbis did not consider suffering to be the mark of a perfect life. They supposed that suffering was generally due to some previous sin.¹ Therefore, they could not agree with Paul that suffering was one of the obligations or conditions of being an heir of God. The son could not be obliged to suffer simply because he was a son. Suffering should be traced to some negative factor, not a positive one.

While Paul does not believe suffering to be a direct result of an individual's sin (the rabbinic viewpoint), he does believe that suffering is the result of Sin which entered into creation at the Fall. Suffering is a present reality, in spite of the fact that Christ redeemed man from Sin. It is one expression of the wrath of God which is directed against Sin which is still in the world. Bo Reicke says,

The Christian's sufferings . . . are really an expression of God's constant wrath but, since the sufferings and death of Christ brought liberation from wrath and condemnation for the Christian who endures sufferings in following Christ, they signify not condemnation, but salvation. . . .²

This suffering with Christ comes as a result of the Christian's incorporation into Christ. Christ and the believers form one Body with Christ as the Head and the believers as the members. As a result, when one suffers, all suffer. The Christian participates in the suffering of Christ not because of sins, but because of salvation. By faith and salvation a man becomes one in Christ, suffers with Him, and will be glorified with Him. Adolf Deissmann put it this way: 'It is not the old Paul, but the new Paul, who is a member of the body of Christ, and who therefore mystically experiences all that that Body experienced and experiences.'³

Paul maintains that a life of joy is to be had through suffering. Suffering is not the predominant feature of the life of a son of God,⁴ for Paul says that the ultimate result of suffering is glorification. The Christian suffers with Christ but is also glorified with Him (Rom. 8.17b-18).

¹ C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *op. cit.*, p. xlii.

² B. Reicke, 'The Law and This World', pp. 271-2.

³ A. Deissmann, *Paul*, London (1926), p. 182. See also T. W. Manson, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

⁴ G. F. Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

Therefore, suffering is a present reality, condition, or obligation of sonship because a Christian is already in Christ and experiences what He experienced and what the members of the Body experience. Suffering is a result of faith and salvation, not the result of sins and unfaithfulness. A statement of W. D. Davies well summarises Paul's idea of suffering with Christ; '... to be "in Christ" involves an identity of experience with Christ. The union of the individual with Christ is such that the experiences of Christ are re-enacted in the experiences of the individual Christian.'¹ Because a man is in Christ, he suffers with Him and His brothers.

In summary, the 'already' of Inheritance can be described as the work of Christ and the obligations of sonship. Because of the work of Christ which Paul believes to be already accomplished, Christians are presently responsible to bear the obligations of the position of sonship in which His redeeming work places them. They should be able by the power of the Spirit to live as a son of God, and to bear the suffering that the Son and sons bear.

B. THE 'NOT YET' OF INHERITANCE

There are at least two features of Paul's concept of Inheritance which might be considered as primarily future, which have not yet been completed, or which are still outstanding. These are the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Kingdom of God and the New Creation.

1. *The Work of the Spirit in Inheritance*

The purely future work of the Spirit in Inheritance is as the agent of resurrection. The Spirit initiates resurrection and the renewal of creation. He provides the spiritual body which is the appropriate state of being for living in the New Creation.

This work of the Spirit occurs in two 'inheritance' passages, 1 Cor. 15.50 and Rom. 8.23. There is an essential connexion between these two passages, because they are both talking about the Inheritance of the sons.

When Paul asserts that 'flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdom' (1 Cor. 15.50), he is obviously implying that only a spiritual body can. It follows, therefore, that part of the In-

¹ W. D. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

heritance is not only a place where the rule of God can be enjoyed—the Kingdom—but also a state or condition in which it can be enjoyed—the spiritual body. He does not attempt to describe that body; he only points out that the Spirit is the agent behind the procurement of both the Kingdom and the spiritual body.¹

The same idea is prominent in Rom. 8.23. Here the Christian is described as the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the future full harvest is evidently the redemption of the body. In other places in his letters Paul describes the Spirit as the 'down-payment' on the heavenly blessings which await the Christian, and as the guarantee of the future Inheritance (2 Cor. 1.22, 5.5; cf. Eph. 1.14).

The Spirit is the agent of the renewal of Creation because of His work in the resurrection of Jesus. Because and by means of the resurrection, Jesus is acknowledged as Lord of Creation, and with His coming came the New Creation. Jesus' resurrection is the 'first-fruits' of the resurrection of the believers which is to come (1 Cor. 15.23f). With the general resurrection comes the End. Then the Kingdom of God and the New Creation will be fully present. Since the Spirit is the power of resurrection, and the resurrection the beginning of the New Creation, it follows that Paul believed the Spirit to be the initiator of the New Creation, which is the Inheritance of the sons of God.²

Therefore, the future work of the Spirit in Inheritance can be described as the agent of resurrection, supplier of the spiritual body, and renewer of creation. 'The properly completed work of the Spirit lies in the future.'³

2. *The Kingdom of God and the New Creation*

It is evident that for Paul the Kingdom of God and the New Creation are still outstanding. This can be seen not only by his persistent use of the future tense of 'to inherit' in reference to them, but also by the close connexion of the Spirit and the Kingdom in his writings.

Even though Paul speaks relatively little about the Kingdom,

¹ N. Q. Hamilton, op. cit., pp. 21-25, 'The Spirit and the Kingdom of God'.

² See ibid., pp. 17-21, for further discussion on the work of the Spirit in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ and the believers.

³ Ibid., p. 32. For a recent and extensive discussion of the work of the Spirit according to Paul, see K. Stalder, *Das Werk des Geistes in der Heiligung bei Paulus*, Zürich (1962), which is far more comprehensive than the title suggests.

it is apparent that it played an important role in his missionary message. It is also apparent that he saw a close connexion between the Spirit and the Kingdom, because he described the Spirit as the down payment or the guarantee of the Inheritance, the Kingdom. The Spirit is part of the future Kingdom. In the resurrection He has broken into this world, allowing the Christian to enjoy a foretaste of the Kingdom and guaranteeing its future possession.¹

Even apart from its connexion with the Spirit, the Kingdom can be described as the future Inheritance. The sons of God shall inherit it; the New Creation will be formed in which it can function; the resurrection will usher it in. It is impossible to read Paul and conclude that the Kingdom of God is present on this earth, for it is the Inheritance which can only be possessed by the sons of God when God is all in all (1 Cor. 15.24-28).

The same general argument holds true for the New Creation, but it is even more characteristically future, since it is ushered in because of and after the resurrection of the sons. It is the ideal Land in which the reign and rule of God is to be centred. The New Creation is the location of the Kingdom of God, therefore the future Inheritance of the sons of God.

In summary, Paul conceives of the Inheritance of the spiritual body, and the full possession of the Kingdom and New Creation to be yet in the future. Because the Spirit plays an important role in both things, and because Paul considers the work of the Spirit to be primarily future, it is clear that the Inheritance is not yet fully possessed.

C. THE 'ALREADY BUT NOT YET' OF INHERITANCE

Properly speaking, there is no one aspect of Inheritance that should be classified as either 'already' or 'not yet', for all of them contain elements of both. Even those aspects which have been classified above as one or the other must be discussed under this section, for it is the essence of Inheritance that it *is*, and yet *is not*. The Inheritance, in all its aspects, has been already fulfilled but not yet completed. It is necessary, therefore, to go back and point out this characteristic of Inheritance under each of the aspects described above.

¹ W. Michaelis, *Reich Gottes und Geist Gottes nach den NT*, Basel (1921), p. 24.

1. *The Work of Christ*

Paul does not argue that Christ's redemptive work is not complete. In Christ the complete means of salvation is present. Nothing else is needed. Neither works of the Law nor physical descent provide salvation, only faith in Christ Jesus.

In other words, the Christian is already redeemed; what he does not yet possess is the full fruits of redemption. He still looks forward to the possession of the resurrection body, and because of Christ's resurrection he waits in 'hope' (Rom. 8.24). He knows that Christ is the forerunner, first-born from the dead, first-fruits of the resurrection. He is sure that because he is in Christ he will share in the resurrection of the faithful which will take place at the Parousia. Christ will come again to bring this age to the End and prepare the way for the Kingdom of God.

Therefore, even though the redemptive work of Christ is very much a part of the 'already' of redemptive history, it is just as certainly a part of the redemption which is yet to come. With the unity of the new man in Christ—an event of the present—he shares in the resurrection and glorification of the people of God at the Parousia—an event of the future. Both are part of the redemptive work of Christ.

2. *The Obligations of Sonship*

If the obligations of sonship are present obligations, they are obligations precisely because they have future ramifications. In some way the moral and ethical behaviour of a son in this world affects his future Inheritance, and the suffering in this world has its counterpart in the glorification in the next.

There is a very definite ethical tension in Paul's teaching. This tension can be seen in many parts of his letters and occurs often in 'inheritance' contexts. It seems apparent that Paul would not have had to warn Christians repeatedly in his mission churches that their moral behaviour would endanger their right to inherit if he believed that they could live entirely in the Spirit. Therefore, the present and future implications of ethics and Inheritance appear in at least two ways.

First, Paul seems to accept the rabbinic teaching that good moral behaviour precedes a man into the World to Come and bears witness for him there. Paul believes that what a man

does on this earth influences his right to inherit in the World to Come. This is apparent not only in the passages which contain the warning phrase 'shall not inherit', but also in chapters 6-8 of Romans, chapter 5 of Galatians, and chapter 6 of 1 Corinthians, to name only the most important. Paul's recurrent warning is best summarised by Gal. 6.7-8. The man who continues to be a slave to the power of the Flesh will not enjoy the blessings of God; he will reap corruption. To put it positively: he who endeavours to live and walk in the Spirit shall inherit the Kingdom. Good deeds cannot save a man, but they are a sign and a seal that a man has been saved and will enjoy the fruits of the Spirit.

Secondly, the product of a man's position in Christ is a constant ethical tension. He lives both in the Flesh and in the Spirit. He has the Spirit of adoption and knows that he is a son of God, but in some sense he is still under the power of the Flesh until Christ comes again and places that power under Him. One indication of man's subjugation to this power is that he must die. He is subject to the power of death even though it has no ultimate hold over him. Both the power of the Flesh and Death can be placed under the category of the *stoicheia tou kosmou*. In spite of his adoption, or redemption, from these powers, man continues to be subject to their influence until the End. Therefore, the Christian in this world lives in the ethical tension of being a son of God and a slave to the elemental spirits.

Paul does not maintain that either he himself or Christians in general can escape this tension, the eschatological tension of being in Christ. This is apparent in Romans, chapters 7 and 8. What he does insist upon is that the Christian has the power at his disposal to successfully struggle against the *stoicheia*. The power of the *stoicheia* is limited to this world, while the Christian lives in the power of the Word to Come. Because the Christian possesses the Spirit of God, his spirit is alive, and his body will be redeemed (Rom. 8.9-11). Paul's ethical injunction, his ethical teaching, is to remind the Christians that they have this power at their disposal. They can defeat the power of the Flesh. Indeed, they must defeat it, for if they allow themselves to fall back into complete slavery, they have no hope. They must walk by the Spirit if they are to be heirs (cf. Gal. 5).

Paul believed that the Christian suffered either physical or

mental anguish in his attempt to be Christ-like. Suffering is due to the tension of ethical living in which man attempts to live in the Spirit and not in the Flesh. The tension created by attempting to fulfil the moral obligations of a son of God while fighting against the power of the *stoicheia*, who struggle to maintain their hold over him, is at least part of the suffering which a man in Christ must bear.

It must be emphasised that the ethical struggle and the ethical tension of the Christian life was very real to Paul. He struggled with the law of sin and knew that there were times when it ruled his flesh. He knows the danger of the temptation to fall back under the yoke of slavery and fear which characterises the 'old' man. But he argues continually that because of Christ, sin and death no longer reign supreme over the Christian's existence. The Christian is a 'new' man in Christ, a member of the New Aeon in which sin and death no longer have a place. Although the ethical tension is a present reality, it will be resolved in the Kingdom. It is the present ethical obligation of the Christian to avail himself of the power of the Spirit, and to strive constantly against the power of the Flesh, knowing that the victory is ultimately assured (Rom. 8.1-11).

The condition of suffering partakes of the 'already but not yet' tension of the Christian life. The Christian suffers because he is in Christ; Christ suffered because of the presence of Sin in this world, therefore the Christian suffers because of Sin. However, suffering is not the permanent lot of the Christian; Paul points out that present suffering is an indication of future glorification. Suffering for the sake of Christ is a minor thing compared to the glory which is yet to be revealed (Rom. 8.17, cf. 2 Tim. 2.12). The 'already' of suffering guarantees the 'not yet' of glorification.¹

3. *The Work of the Spirit*

Perhaps it is the work of the Spirit in Inheritance which most characteristically partakes of the nature of the 'already but not yet'. Even though His work is part of and completed in the Kingdom of God, it is also a present work, because the Kingdom has broken into this world. Everything that the Spirit does is 'already fulfilled but not yet completed'.

¹ Cf. O. Kuss, *op. cit.*, pp. 608-9. C. A. A. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

(a) *Adoption, Sonship and Heirship*

The present work of the Spirit is in assuring the man in Christ that he has been adopted into the family of God. The Spirit is the witness to the fact that by faith men become the seed of Abraham, the sons of God, and the people of God. He is also the present power by which the sons of God are able to maintain the moral standard of a son. He is the guarantee that the heirs will possess the Inheritance. In all these things the work of the Spirit is 'already' present.

However, there is a definite 'not yet' to Adoption. In Rom. 8.23, Paul says that 'we wait for adoption', and the fulfilment of adoption is the redemption of the body. In other words, the redeeming of the spirit from the power of the *stoicheia* (Gal. 4.4-7; Rom. 8.1-11) does not complete adoption. Adoption is complete only when the whole man is redeemed.

The parallel idea here is Paul's assertion that flesh and blood will not inherit the Kingdom, and that man is a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5.17). The present work of Christ and the Spirit in salvation and adoption finds its fulfilment in the new creature who enters into the New Creation. Adoption will be completed when the heir enters into his Inheritance. Therefore, the work of the Spirit in Adoption is 'already but not yet'.¹

If the present work of the Spirit is to assure Christians that they are sons of God, His future work is to reveal the sons of God (cf. Rom. 8.19). This disclosure has several features; it involves the Resurrection, the redemption of the body, which might also be called 'glorification', and entrance into the New Creation.

In other words, while the present work of the Spirit is guaranteeing the believer that he is a son and heir of God, His future work is making good that guarantee by providing entrance into the Inheritance.²

(b) *The Kingdom of God and the New Creation*

Although the Kingdom and the New Creation are primarily future objects of Inheritance, by the work of the Spirit they

¹ W. Michaelis, op. cit., p. 24, says, 'Der gegenwärtige Geistbesitz, wiewohl das Höchstmass göttliche Hilfe (Rom. 8.26), steht in einer Spannung zur Enderwartung, die sich mit der "Erlösung des Leibes" (Rom. 8.23) erfüllen wird, das heisst der Auferstehung des Toten die das Reich Gottes einleitet.'

² Cf. E. Lewis, 'A Christian Theodicy: An Exposition of Romans 8.18-39', *Interpretation*, 11 (1957), p. 416.

become partially present, for the Spirit is described by Paul as the first-fruits of the Inheritance and the guarantee of its possession. Therefore, the present possession of the Spirit and the future possession of the Kingdom are essentially related.¹ The present power of the Spirit is a foretaste of the future Kingdom and an indication that the Kingdom has come into this world.

However, it is evident that neither the Kingdom nor the New Creation is fully manifest. 'Creation waits for a cosmic deliverance, which includes the resurrection of the dead, and that is not yet. . . . While the Reign of Christ has begun, not all the Messiah's enemies are yet under His feet, not yet is the End.'² It is the future work of the Spirit, primarily in the resurrection of the believers, to bring to fulfilment the promised Inheritance; that is, to usher in the Kingdom of God and provide the believer with the condition in which to enjoy it. Clearly His work is already present but not yet completed.

In summary, no one aspect of Inheritance can be classified as either completely present or completely future. While some might be primarily one or the other, each shares in the eschatological pattern of Inheritance, that it *is* and yet *is not*. The man in Christ is already heir; his possession is guaranteed. He already has the promise of the Inheritance and shares in its blessings. However, like an heir, he must wait to take full possession. Like the people of God he looks forward to the time when he knows the redemption of his body, and as a new creature enters into the Land, i.e. the New Creation. The heirs of God have the Inheritance and look forward to its possession.

D. THE INHERITANCE METAPHOR—SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

By his use of the Inheritance metaphor in its various aspects—sonship, heirship, adoption, seed of Abraham, etc.—Paul does not deviate essentially from the biblical concept, or Old Testament use, of Inheritance. He describes the Inheritance of the believer as the promised divine blessings of God which He gave to Abraham and brought to fulfilment in Christ, the

¹ H. Gunkel, *Die Wirkung des Heiligen Geistes*, Göttingen (1889), p. 62f.

² W. Manson, *Eschatology*, London (1953), p. 13. See also N. Dahl, 'Christ, Creation, and the Church', *The Background of the NT and its Eschatology* (ed. W. D. Davies), pp. 437-40.

blessings of salvation which enable a man to partake in the Kingdom in the present and in the future. The Inheritance is a guaranteed possession of the believer which he fully possesses but not yet completely.¹

The concept behind the word, both legal and religious, lends itself to the 'already-not yet' eschatological pattern of Paul's teaching. Although Abraham possessed the Promise of the Inheritance, he never possessed fully the Inheritance itself. The Promised Land was always only his Inheritance, never his full possession. The same was true for his descendants after the flesh. They never enjoyed full possession of the Land, and so continued to describe it as their Inheritance. This same attitude is present in the New Testament teaching about the Kingdom; it is the promised possession, the Inheritance.

The legal picture behind the word only reinforces this idea. An inheritance is something, normally land, which is the promised possession of the heir. It is his in every way but that of complete possession. He stands in expectation of it. In other words, he is heir and not owner; it is his inheritance and not his possession.

It is the nature of Inheritance, therefore, that it is already a promised possession, but not yet an actual possession. This is the Old Testament, New Testament, and legal idea of the word. It is present, yet outstanding.

While legally it would be possible for a man to make a new testament and disinherit his heirs, it is the witness of the Old and New Testaments that God will not do that. He has sent His Son and the Spirit to guarantee the faithful that they will be heirs. The possession of the Inheritance is absolutely assured if a man is in Christ and lives in the Spirit.

All the elements of Inheritance are already present: salvation, resurrection, the work of the Spirit, the Lordship of Christ, the Kingdom of God, and the New Creation. However, because they are elements of the Inheritance, they have the nature of an inheritance; they stand in the future to be completely enjoyed. Therefore, when Paul uses the words or concepts of Inheritance, he automatically introduces the elements of the 'already fulfilled but not yet completed' into each feature or aspect of Inheritance, for it is the nature of Inheritance to be that way.

¹ See definition in E. Lohmeyer, *Diathēkē*, p. 140.

SECTION THREE

INHERITANCE AND ITS MEANING FOR HEILSGESCHICHTE

THE purpose of this section is to summarise and clarify the Heilsgeschichtlich implications of Paul's concept of Inheritance. Whereas the purpose of Section Two was to present his concept with its assorted manifestations and explain points in his concept which are unique to his argument, the purpose of this section is to set Paul's concept within the biblical concept and to demonstrate how he depended on and strengthened the historical reality of the Inheritance and its foundation in God's acts in history.

To put it another way: it is the purpose of this section to demonstrate that Paul believed in the continuity of the historic reality of God's Promise to Abraham that he would have a good Land and that his descendants would become God's holy nation within that Land. Paul's concept of Inheritance not only demonstrates an 'already but not yet' pattern of eschatology, but also strengthens the conviction of the New Testament that God acted decisively in history to form a holy people and provide them with a suitable land. Moreover, for Paul what God promised to do for Abraham He fulfilled in Christ, who is the Heir and who leads his fellow-heirs in to the Inheritance.

I. ABRAHAM AND ISRAEL

In both Gal. 3 and Rom. 4 Paul draws the line of election history from Abraham and his descendants to Christ and the Church. The concept of Inheritance is central to his argument in both places and provides the continuity that he seeks to demonstrate. In both passages it can be said that Abraham, Israel, Christ and the Church are heirs according to the Promise.

The history of Inheritance begins with the call of God to Abraham while he was in Haran. God came to him and promised him a land and descendants of his own. Abraham responded in faith and obedience, thereby becoming the

original heir of the Promise. He is the beginning point of the Inheritance. From the time of his call on, Abraham was seen as the father of the people of God, and this was as true for Paul as it is for Judaism.

Paul makes this especially clear in Rom. 4. In the opening verse of that chapter he sets Abraham up both as a historical figure and as an example of faith which issues in righteousness. In verse 1 Paul calls Abraham *propatora hēmōn kata sarka*. This phrase has a dual meaning.

First, and most obviously, Paul depends on the conception of Abraham in the Old Testament and late Judaism which designates Abraham as the progenitor of the people of Israel. In this case the 'seed of Abraham' was not used as a metaphor but as a biological fact. 'According to the flesh' in verse 1 would, therefore, denote physical descent.¹

Secondly, it is possible that Paul also uses 'according to the flesh' to designate the historical reality of Abraham. He is saying that Abraham dwelt in the flesh; he was a real person at a definite point in history; he had a real existence. Therefore, another translation of the phrase could be 'our historical forefather'. By this phrase Paul wishes to point out that not only can the Jews claim him as their forefather, but also, and perhaps more important, the faithful can claim him as their forefather.²

Therefore, Paul conceives of Abraham as the 'father' of two distinct, but related, types of people. He is the father of his physical descendants, and he is the father of the faithful. Paul does not view these two types as mutually exclusive. In fact, 'father of the faithful' is a more inclusive term, because from the time of Christ on, it includes not only the faithful who have

¹ O. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 115. O. Kuss, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

² G. Klein, 'Exegetische Probleme in Römer 3,21-4,25', ET, 24 (1964), p. 681, ft. 13, explains the phrase 'forefather according to the flesh' as dependent on circumcision. He says that Paul is referring to empirical sonship of Abraham which is evident in circumcision. While Klein might be correct in assuming that sonship to Abraham in late Judaism was described in terms of those who were circumcised, he is not correct in making Paul's phrase dependent on that teaching. Not only is the leap from 4.1 to 4.11-12 which Klein wants to take exegetically difficult to make, that is to say Klein wishes to make the phrase soteriologically unimportant as circumcision is unimportant for salvation (see p. 680), but also since Paul was writing to Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, he was probably more interested in the historicity of Abraham. He wants to allude not to the empirical sonship of circumcision but to the fatherhood of Abraham for all the people of God, the faithful Jews and the faithful Gentiles. This should become more evident in the course of our argument.

been circumcised, but also the uncircumcised faithful. Abraham is the father of all the faithful—Jew and Gentile alike (Rom. 4.11-12).

In what sense is Abraham 'father of all those who believe' (Rom. 4.11), or 'father of many nations' (Rom. 4.18)? Abraham is the father of those who believe because they become by faith his 'seed' (Gal. 3.29) and share in his Inheritance (Rom. 4.13). In other words, the Promise with its blessings, the Inheritance, was given to Abraham; he is, or may be called, the original heir of the Promise. All others partake in the Inheritance only if they are his descendants. The Promise is a patrimony which Abraham passes on to his 'seed'. Therefore, Abraham is the 'father', the one from whom the Inheritance is passed on. Since the Inheritance is passed on to the faithful, Abraham is the 'father of the faithful'.

Why is Paul concerned to use Abraham as a typological figure? Why does he point to Abraham as the faithful one? While many answers could be given to these questions, there are at least two major ones which arise from Paul's concept of Inheritance.

First, and more generally, Paul uses Abraham because he agrees with the Old Testament and late Judaism that the Promise and the Inheritance find their beginning points in him. This is the basic idea that lies behind Gal. 3, and Rom. 4. While Paul is concerned to show that Abraham was justified by faith and not by works, he is concerned to do so because of the consequence of his faith. That is to say, Paul is not concerned about Abraham's faith as an end in itself. He does not make Abraham's faith encounter with God the decisive factor in the Abraham story. On the contrary, Paul is concerned to show that by his faith Abraham obtained the Promise and the Inheritance (Rom. 4.13-14, Gal. 3.18).

Therefore it must be maintained that Paul is as concerned about Abraham's Promise as he is about Abraham's faith.¹ The Promise is the foundation on which faith rests. Paul wants to show that God called Abraham by grace. The Promise was given before Abraham had faith. Abraham did not first have faith and then hear God's Promise. Abraham believed that God would bring to fulfilment what He had promised, and then he was justified (Rom. 4.20-23). The Promise was primary

¹ Against E. Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, London (1964), p. 176.

to Abraham's justification; there could be no response in faith, and hence no justification without the Promise. Therefore, the 'Stichwort' of Rom. 4 and Gal. 3 is not *pistis* but *epaggelia*.¹

The Promise to Abraham is not a double promise; it is one Promise with two facets—Land and People. The Land is primary. Paul does not ignore this fact; he does not eliminate the Land promise from the total Promise.² The Land Promise continues to be the foundation of the existence of the people of God. This is the thought behind inheriting the Kingdom. The people of God find the fulfilment of their existence when they enter into the Kingdom.

Therefore, Paul looks back to Abraham and his Promise for the background of his Inheritance concept, and he has in mind the Abrahamic Promise for a Land and People when he uses *epaggelia* in Inheritance contexts. Paul may universalise the Promise so that the Land becomes the World and the Seed are men of all faith,³ but it is still the Abrahamic Promise to which Paul refers in places like Gal. 3.18.

The second, and dependent, answer is that Paul wishes to show the continuity of the type of faith which results in partaking in the Inheritance. Paul uses Abraham as the first of the heirs of God. Because of his faith Abraham marks the establishment of the office of heir and the Inheritance. He believed that God would fulfil the Promise which He had made, and thus became an heir; the Christian believes that God has fulfilled that Promise, and he too becomes an heir. It is the same type of faith, a faith which believes that God in His electing grace and love has acted for salvation and justification, and that that act results in a man becoming an heir, a child of the Promise.

One further thing must be noted. Abraham's Promise was not that God would save him by faith. If this had been his Promise, then Abraham could have earned his position as heir. His salvation could have been earned by a 'work', a conscious effort on his part to be saved. On the contrary, Abraham's Promise was that he would have a Land of his own filled with his descendants. He believed that God would bring this to fulfilment, and this belief was reckoned to him as righteousness. His

¹ Against G. Klein, 'Individualgeschichte und Weltgeschichte bei Paulus', p. 149; 'Römer 4 und die Idee der Heilsgeschichte', p. 439.

² Against C. Dietzfelbinger, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

³ J. Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung*, München (1964), p. 135.

faith was dependent on his Promise.¹ This preceded faith just as it preceded the Law. Abraham received his Inheritance on the basis of the Promise before his act of faith. His faith was a sign and seal of his acceptance of the Inheritance.

Therefore, it must be maintained that Paul was concerned not only to use Abraham as a typological figure of faith, but also, and more importantly, as the original heir of the Promise, first figure in election history, a major figure in Heilsgeschichte.² Without the foundation of the Promise, Abraham's faith is not only a 'work' but also an end in itself, thereby losing all meaning as an illustration of effective faith. Paul does not say that Abraham had faith for the sake of faith, but that Abraham's faith was the key by which he received the Inheritance. On that basis is he important for the Christian. Because he was the first heir, he is father of all those who by faith become heirs, and because of the continuity of the Promise his Inheritance is their Inheritance.

The physical descendants of Abraham, the Jews, believed themselves to be the chosen people of God because of their descent from Abraham and because of their observance of the Torah. The election of Abraham and the promise of the Land were the basis of their existence. On account of these things they were called out of Egypt and brought into the Promised Land. On account of them they were not forgotten by God either in the wilderness or in the Exile. Because of God's electing grace and love, and because they kept His laws and commandments, they were heirs of the Promise and would inherit the World to Come.

In one sense Paul does not directly dispute this teaching. Where he differs with the teaching of late Judaism on the place of Israel in God's plan of salvation is in the means by which Israel inherits. Israel is not heir, says Paul, on the basis of physical descent or works of the Law. They were to respond to God's election and call in faith, if they were to be the 'seed' of Abraham. They were not involved in religion as part of a national inheritance, but their salvation, their becoming 'seed' and children of the Promise, depended on a faith response to God's covenant.³ Paul says clearly in Romans 9-11, that the true children of Abraham are the children of the Promise,

¹ Against E. Fuchs, loc. cit.

² Against C. Dietzfelbinger, op. cit., p. 18.

³ C. H. Dodd, *The Meaning of Paul*, pp. 39-40.

and the children of the Promise are those who have faith.

This teaching of Paul's does not eliminate the possibility that there were children of the Promise who lived under the Law before Christ. It is impossible to maintain that Paul believed God to have abandoned His people from the time of Abraham and the Exodus until the time of Christ. On the contrary, Paul says that God would not abandon His people whom He foreknew (Rom. 11.2). Before Christ the Law was effective for salvation of the Jew who had faith like his father Abraham (cf. Rom. 3.30-31), but it also brought the wrath of God to those who depended on works of the Law instead of faith. Those who pursued righteousness before Christ failed to obtain it not because the Law was ineffective, but because they had no faith (Rom. 9.31-32).

Paul evidently believed that a certain number of Israelites had faith under the Law, because he subscribes to the prophetic witness that a remnant would be saved (Rom. 9.27, 11.4-5). Paul's thesis is consistent throughout: the heirs of the Inheritance are the children of the Promise, whether they be faithful Jews under the Law before Christ, or Jews and Gentiles in Christ; and the children of the Promise are those who had and have faith like their father, Abraham.

Therefore, it is possible to say that Paul believed that God's electing grace and love operated for salvation, for the establishment of the heirs, throughout the history of Israel. These heirs were the children of the Promise. Their position as seed of Abraham and heirs of God depended on God's free grace and election, and their faith response to God's covenant.¹

In summary, Paul believed the history of Inheritance to have begun with Abraham and his Promise. He sees Abraham as father of the faithful, because Abraham received his Inheritance by faith and shares his Inheritance with men of faith. There is, therefore, a definite continuity in the office of heirship which comes from Abraham to the faithful remnant to Christ and to the Church.

II. CHRIST AS THE HEIR

The mid-point of Paul's concept of Inheritance is the coming of the true Heir, Christ Jesus. Before His coming, Israel had failed to fulfil the Promise, failed to become the holy nation of

¹ Ibid., pp. 38, 82.

God which brought a blessing to the Gentiles, because of its unfaithfulness. It did not respond to God's grace and love in obedience and loyalty but sought to earn its own salvation by works, thus failing to fulfil its side of the covenant of faith. Then God sent His Son. He came to be what Israel failed to become, the perfect Servant of God.¹

Christ is also the Seed to whom the Promise of Abraham is given. Paul is arguing that Christ is *the* Child of the Promise. He believes Him to be *the* Descendant from whom the people of God would be formed. He is the true 'Isaac'. Even though He was born under the Law (Gal. 4.4), He re-established the covenant of Faith (Gal. 3.16-25), the covenant through which God deals with His people. By re-establishing the covenant of faith, the Abrahamic covenant, Christ does what Israel failed to do; He makes the grace of God available to all men through faith, regardless of ethnic distinctions. He shows Himself to be the true Seed of Abraham because He is the means by which men of faith are formed into the people of God, and this is the purpose of the 'seed'.

Because Christ is the promised Seed, He is also the Heir, and, therefore, the mid-point of the Inheritance concept. If the Inheritance is to be passed on, it must be passed on through Him. If there are to be descendants who inherit, they must be descendants created by faith in Him. In other words, with the re-establishment of the covenant of faith and with the appearance of the promised Heir, the factors needed to establish the people of God, the descendants of Abraham who are to inherit the Land and become God's holy nation, are once more present.

Therefore, Christ can be called the Heir of the Promise, because it is from Him that all others derive their position as heirs and their share in the Inheritance. Descent from Christ by faith is what makes a man a child of the Promise, an heir according to the Promise. Christ is the Heir from whom all other heirs must now descend.²

The Heir and the Inheritance are never the same thing in Paul's concept. Christ is the mid-point of the concept. The Christian does not inherit Christ by faith; he inherits the Kingdom. Christ is the means by which men are saved and formed into God's people. If Christ were the 'end' of faith, He would

¹ J. Jocz, op. cit., pp. 106, 117.

² O. Kuss, op. cit., p. 282.

be called the Inheritance. Existence in Christ would be the only and final result of salvation. However, Paul designates Jesus as the *means* not the *end* of salvation. By faith in Christ men enter into the Kingdom, and this is the final result of salvation.

III. THE CHURCH AS HEIRS AND THEIR INHERITANCE

Because Christ is the true Seed of Abraham, the Child to whom the Promise is given, He is the propagator of the people Israel, or the people of God. When men join themselves by faith to Him, they become the 'new' Israel. 'Christians in the New Testament do learn to think of the call and covenants of the people of God in the past as in some sense their own. The Exodus is their Exodus; the patriarchs and prophets are their spiritual kings; from Abraham through Moses and Israel, through the remnant of the righteous, to Jesus and the new seed of Abraham, one continuous line may be drawn, the line of Heilsgeschichte.'¹ One facet of this line of solidarity between the Church and Israel is the continuity of the office of heir which the faithful share as the seed of Abraham.

This solidarity and continuity is impossible to deny when one sees that Paul identifies Christians as the seed of Abraham.²

¹ G. Johnston, 'The Church and Israel', JR, 34 (1954), p. 35. Cf. K. Frör, *Biblische Hermeneutik*, München (1961), 'Die Heilsgeschichte', pp. 86-103.

² C. Dietzfelbinger, op. cit., pp. 27, 31, maintains that Paul is not indebted to the OT for the meaning of the 'seed of Abraham' concept. He argues that in the OT and late Judaism 'seed of Abraham' was a designation for Israel, a 'völkischer Begriff', in contrast to *ethnē* which designated peoples outside of Israel. Therefore, 'this meaning of *sperma* has no support in the Abraham story and it cannot be justified through the OT meaning of the seed of Abraham' (p. 27). When Paul uses the phrase, he is referring to the 'Gemeinde der Glaubenden' (p. 31), i.e. the *ecclesia*, the *sōma tou Christou*. While it cannot be denied that Dietzfelbinger is correct in his contention that the 'seed of Abraham' in the literature of late Judaism is the designation of the physical descendants of Abraham, it must be maintained that he refuses to note that Paul's argument concerning the identity of the seed is fully dependent on the OT. Paul wants to pass over rabbinic teaching and show that the OT itself designated the seed as the children of the Promise, hence his argument in Rom. 9. 'The seed are not just those who stand in a 'blood line'; they are those who are the descendants of the Promise. The seed are the believing community, but this community includes the faithful under the Law and in Christ. Dietzfelbinger has failed to recognise the continuity of the children of the Promise from Abraham to the remnant to Christ to the Church. One further point: Dietzfelbinger tends to mix together the teachings of late Judaism and the teachings of the OT, so that when he concludes that Paul cannot be dependent on the OT for the meanings of 'promise', 'faith' and 'seed', his conclusions are based mostly on arguments with rabbinic theology, which is generally more radical than OT theology. His conclusions might have more support if he considered just rabbinic theology, but by reading the OT and rabbinic theology as one and the same thing, he seriously, if not totally, weakens his entire argument.

With the Old Testament he understands the 'seed' to be the faithful. Using Old Testament texts in Rom. 9, he shows that physical descent counts for nothing, because God forms His people from those who have faith; these are the 'seed', circumcised or uncircumcised.

Whereas men of faith before Christ were the 'seed of Abraham' within 'physical Israel', Paul says that men of faith after Christ are the 'seed of Abraham' within 'eschatological Israel', the Church (cf. Eph. 2.11-22). God in Christ forms eschatological Israel from the faithful. The basis of the formation of God's people was always faith, but now it is faith in Jesus Christ which admits a man into the nation of God.¹ If a man is in Christ, 'he becomes a member of the eschatological body of Christ. . . . He is elect and becomes Abraham's offspring and an heir according to the promise.'²

The Church, therefore, becomes co-heir of the Promise in Christ. Paul does not teach that it is a new Promise which the Church shares in. The Promise is the same for Abraham and his seed as it is for Paul and the Church. The terminology might be different. While the Old Testament talks of the children of Israel and the land of Canaan, Paul speaks of the Church and the Kingdom. The concept is the same, however. The faithful of Israel and the Church are the sons of God, heirs according to the Promise. Their Inheritance is a place in which they enjoy the reign and rule of God, the Promised Land. They are the true Israel, the people of God, and by faith share in the heritage of the faithful.³

There is both a continuity and a discontinuity of the office of heirship in Paul's teaching. The continuity is based on the covenant of faith and the office of heir which it establishes. Christ does not bring a new covenant.⁴ Israel, both old and new, is established by the covenant of faith which began with Abraham. The faithful are heirs, because they fulfil their side of the covenant.

The discontinuity for Paul comes in the means provided by God for the establishment of heirship. Faith was and is the means on man's side, but on account of the sin of mankind

¹ C. K. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

² E. Dinkler, 'The Historical and Eschatological Israel in Romans 9-11', JR, 36 (1956), p. 124.

³ Cf. A. Oepke, *Das Neue Gottesvolk*, Gütersloh (1950), pp. 202-9.

⁴ Against R. Bultmann, *Theology of the NT*, London (1952), II, p. 97.

God provided a new divine means by sending His Son. Now not only have works of the Law been discredited and shown to be ineffective for salvation, but even the Law itself, which could have been fulfilled by faith and thus provide salvation, has been set aside. It was only a temporary guide for the faithful until Christ came (Gal. 3.23-26). Once He had come, He became the mid-point of God's plan of salvation. In Him God brought to fulfilment His Promise to form His people. The Many had been reduced to the One, and the One now establishes the Many. '... In the Pauline view both the individual and the community stem from the Holy Root and are, therefore, the Holy Seed, if not by nature at least by Promise. ... Israel includes the Messiah, the faithful remnant, and the believing Gentiles.'¹

Therefore, it must be said that continuity and discontinuity go hand-in-hand in Paul's concept of Inheritance. The goal is always the same, the end of God's plan of salvation is the formation of the people of God in the Land, but the means to that end change from the Law which is fulfilled by faith to Christ who is to be joined by faith.

The Inheritance for Paul is the heavenly Kingdom of God which is perfectly realised in the new world.² It includes both the place where God rules and the rule of God itself. It is the eschatological Land where God exercises His rule over His people.

Paul says that the Inheritance is a present reality in the appearance of the Heir. In Him the blessings of the Kingdom are enjoyed—eternal life, possession of the Spirit, and fellowship with the people of God. However, even though the Inheritance is a present reality, it is not yet fully possessed; it remains an Inheritance.

What the Kingdom of God lacks, the reason it remains an Inheritance, is a Land in which to be established. The Christians, like the Israelites, look forward to the possession of the Land. Here again the solidarity of the Church with Israel is apparent. However, the Land is a reality in as much as Jesus the Heir, who is also the Lord of Creation, has brought into being the New Creation. This is the Land which the people of God will inherit.

In summary, Paul believes that the Church is the heir of God,

¹ J. Jocz, *op. cit.*, pp. 111, 114.

² B. Weiss, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 153-4.

or made up of the heirs of God, because by faith in Christ Jesus they have become the seed of Abraham, the true Israel, the heirs according to the Promise. The Inheritance which they inherit is the same Inheritance that God promised Abraham. Paul does not conceive of a new Inheritance. He is dependent on the concept of Inheritance which he found in the Old Testament and late Judaism. He also believes in the historical and geographical reality of the Inheritance. It will be completely possessed at a point in time—the Parousia—and will be located in a definite territory—the New Creation.

IV. INHERITANCE AND HEILSGESCHICHTE—CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The purpose of this short, often repetitious, section has been to demonstrate that Paul's concept of Inheritance has its roots deep in Heilsgeschichte. At every point in his concept the dependence on Heilsgeschichte can be, and it is hoped has been, demonstrated.

In not every point in Pauline theology is this dependence so readily demonstrable. There are places where it recedes into the background of his teaching and can be inferred only vaguely from what he is saying. However, it is impossible to remove Heilsgeschichte from his teaching on Inheritance and leave any meaning. Heilsgeschichte is clearly present in Gal. 3 and 4, Rom. 4 and 8.¹ A good summary statement of this is given by Oscar Cullmann when he says,

The double movement of redemptive history comes most clearly to expression in the sketch that Paul gives in Gal. 3.6 to 4.7. He takes his start from the promise to Abraham. Then he shows how this promise, which is a promise to the descendants of Abraham, is realised as a promise to the One, Christ, who effects the ransom by his vicarious death. This event has as its result that all men who believe in Christ can become descendants of Abraham. Through baptism they all enter into the promise that had been given to the One. The way is now open to the many, but in such a way that the many are 'all one', namely in Christ Jesus. Thus they all now become sons and heirs.²

In Paul's concept of Inheritance all the high points of salvation history are present—the election, call, and Promise to

¹ Recently C. Dietzfelbinger has made another attack against this conclusion in *Heilsgeschichte bei Paulus?*, TEH, 126, München (1965).

² O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. 118. Cf. *Heil als Geschichte*, p. 242.

Abraham and his descendants; the sending of the Son and Heir, and His death and resurrection to establish heirship for all men; the establishment of the Inheritance, the Kingdom, by the witness of the Spirit and the coming of the New Creation—and can be excised from it only by the most radical criticism.¹

What are the results of removing Heilsgeschichte from Paul's concept of Inheritance? At least two apparent ones arise. First, the removal of Heilsgeschichte from the concept of Inheritance results in the subsequent failure to be able to define the new relationship that men have to God. That is to say, the office of heir with its dependence on the Promise and the Fulfilment is left without foundation. Without the historical office of heir which comes from Abraham to Israel to Christ to the Church, man must be told that he must have faith for the sake of faith. His faith is an individualistic encounter which results not in incorporation into heirship, but which ultimately reduces to an appreciation for faith in itself. This kind of individualistic, self-centred faith cannot presuppose God's grace and election as manifest in the Promise. In reality it can presuppose nothing, for it is a punctiliar act, a moment of decision, that takes no account of the linear, no account of being a seed of Abraham and a fellow-heir with Christ. The man who is told that he must have faith, but is denied the explanation of the acts of God which generate faith, cannot possibly understand what it means to share in the Inheritance of the saints. 'In no great religious experience (Hebrew-prophetic or Christian-apostolic) can history exist without some final hope in God, *nor can any hope in God exist which does not take account of history*.'² Faith in God has its elementary ground in history, so that faith and history go together.³ If a man is to understand what his faith results in, if he is to appreciate his new position as a son and heir of God, he has to know the history of salvation.⁴

Secondly, the removal of Heilsgeschichte from the concept of Inheritance has as its subsequent result a failure to be able to

¹ For example, G. Klein, 'Römer 4 und die Idee der Heilsgeschichte', and 'Individualgeschichte und Weltgeschichte bei Paulus'. Recently Klein has made a summary statement of his position in an article entitled 'Heil und Geschichte nach Römer IV', NTS, 13 (1966), pp. 43-47.

² W. Manson, *op. cit.*, p. 8. My italics.

³ U. Wilckens, 'Die Rechtfertigung Abrahams', p. 127.

⁴ Or, to put it in the words of C. Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 106: 'In the thought of the Apostle one could say: He who does not understand the history of Israel, understands neither the history of the world, or his own.' (My translation.)

define the Inheritance. That is to say, the Inheritance is left without content. It cannot be the Land, for the Land has historical and geographical reality, and it cannot be the Kingdom for the same reason. Any attempt to describe the Inheritance without its historical foundation reduces the description to an abstract statement about faith. Hence the Promise, which cannot speak about a historical Land and People, is described as a promise for salvation, which in reality is the confirmation of the Promise, not its content. Or, *klēronomia* must be defined as becoming a son, which is the means by which one shares in the Inheritance, not the Inheritance itself. On the contrary, if Paul's concept of Inheritance is to be completely understood, if the sons and heirs of God are to know what they inherit by faith, the history of salvation must be retained as an integral part of Paul's teaching on Inheritance.

Therefore, Paul's concept of Inheritance is based on Heilsgeschichte. By means of this concept he shows Christians what their heritage is—they are the seed of Abraham and fellow-heirs with Christ—and what their Inheritance is—the eschatological Land, the Kingdom of God.

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